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SEPTEMBER 2001

COLLECTOR'S EDITION

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ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

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FIVE AMAZING YEARS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

90 PAGES ON THE NET'S PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

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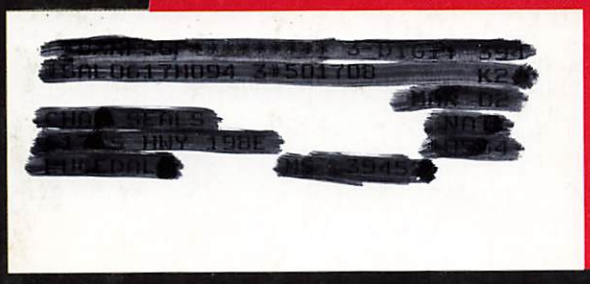

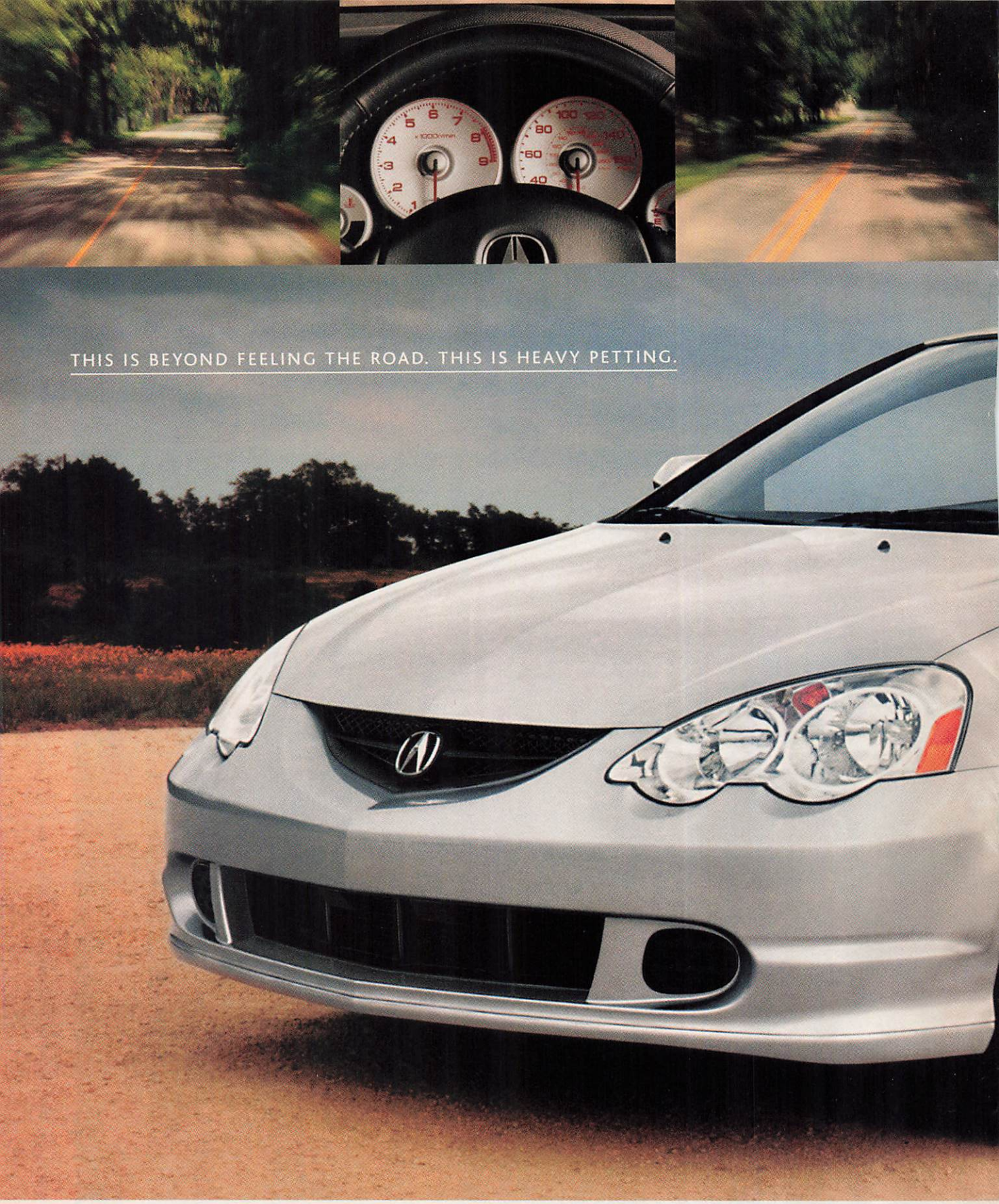

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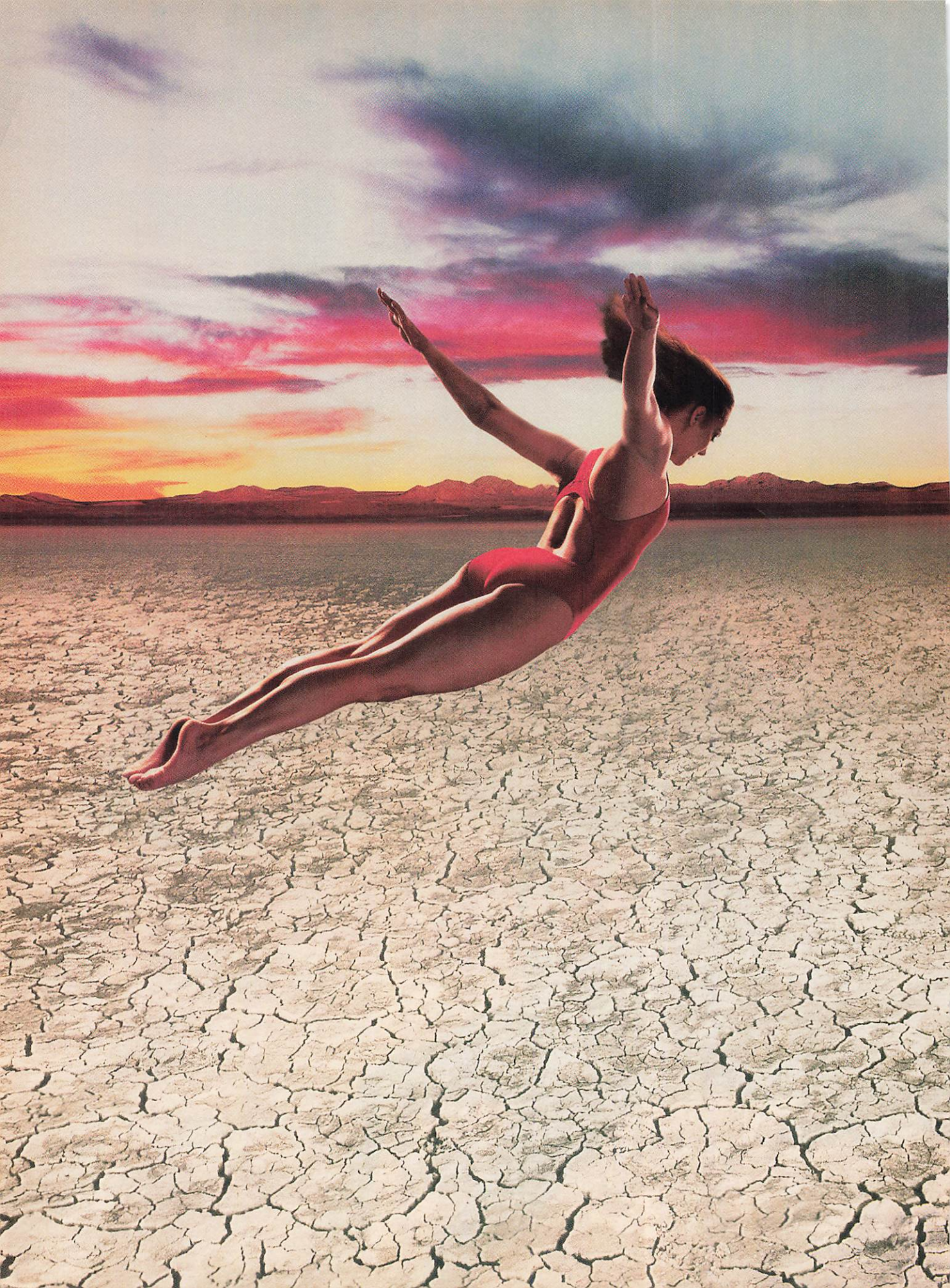

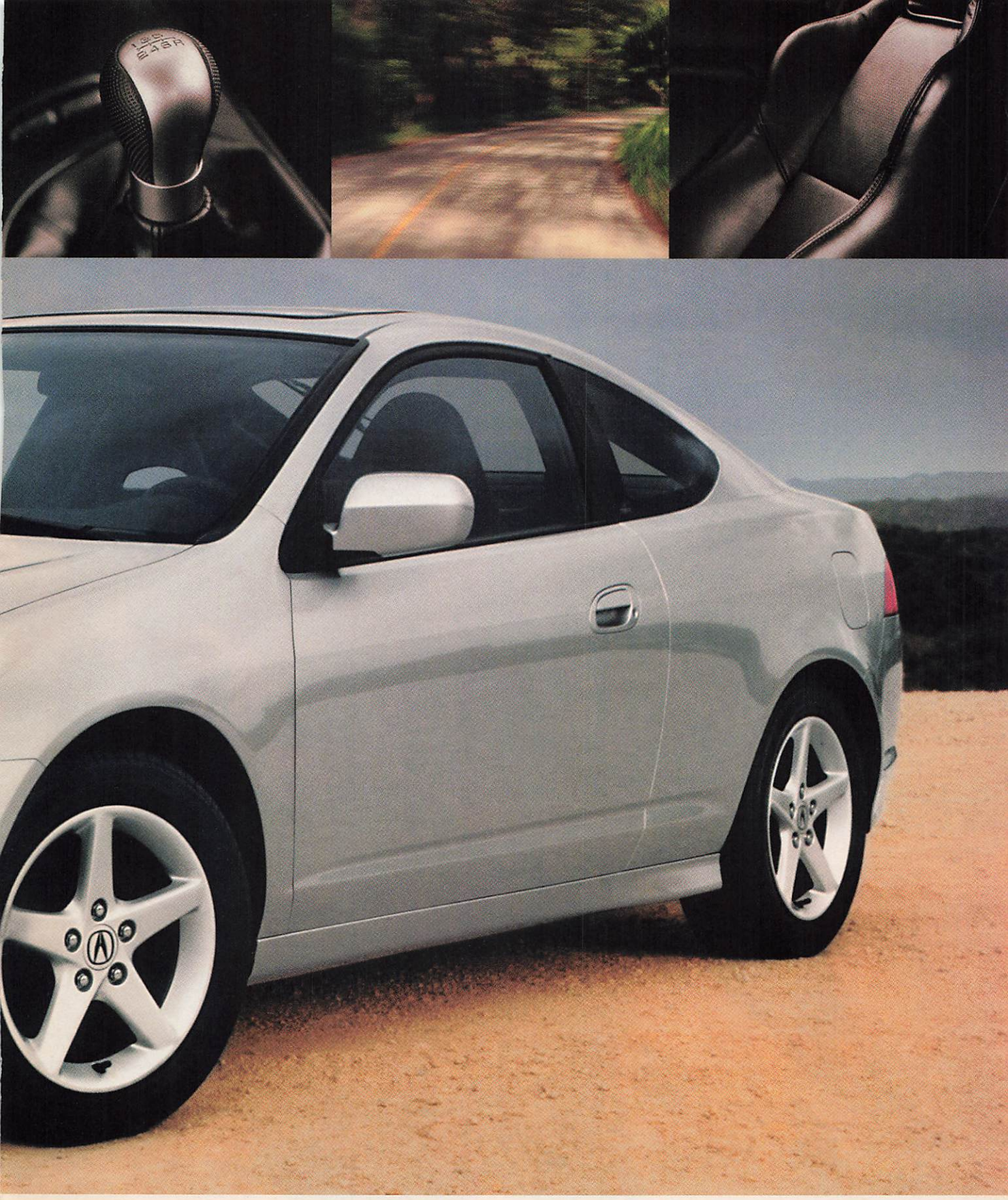

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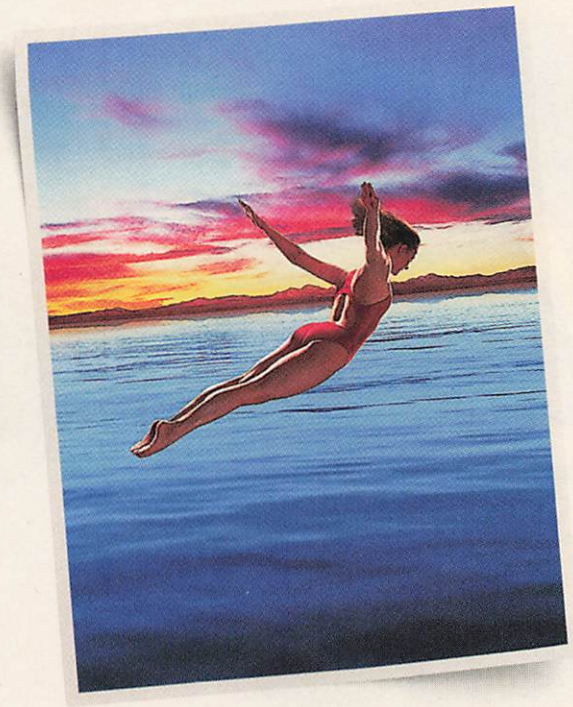

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SEPTEMBER 2001
VOLUME 7
NUMBER 9

YAHOO! INTERNET LIFE®

CONTENTS

FEATURES

FIFTH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE: THE STATE OF THE NET

76 **WHERE WE ARE NOW**
Five years after the boom of the browser and the launch of *Y-Life*, the story of a medium that changed the world BY ANGELA GUNN

79 **STATE OF THE NET**
What we've learned in travel, health, community, entertainment, games, finance, shopping, and computing. With special reports from Martha Stewart, Chuck D, and others EDITED BY CREE McCREE

102 **WHAT IF THOSE E-MAIL PROMISES CAME TRUE?**
Get rich quick, find the girl of your dreams, get an MBA overnight—and do it all in style PHOTOGRAPHED BY MOSHE BRAKHA

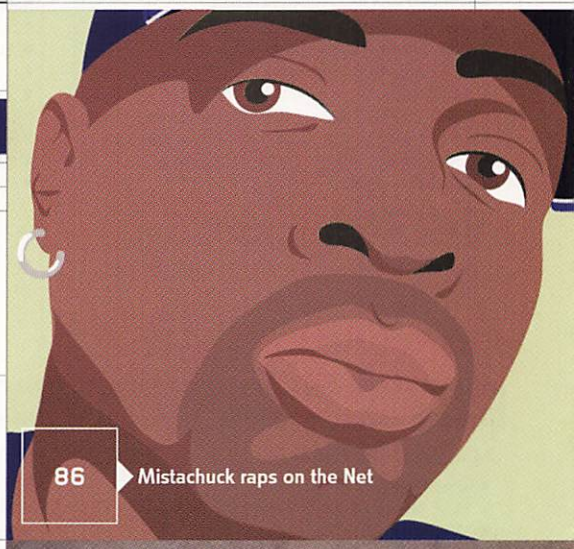
110 **THIS WAS OUR *Y-LIFE***
What we saw at the revolution. Five years, five pages—no waiting. It's time to hit the Back button EDITED BY RON BEL BRUNO

116 **THE BEST AND WORST OF THE NET**
These were the days. The 30 best moments in Internet history—plus 15 bummers we'd like to banish

122 **17 PEOPLE (AND ONE SOCK PUPPET) WHO SHAPED THE NET**
A virtual gathering of the ultimate IT crowd, starring Jerry Yang, Stephen King, Bill Gates, Al Gore, Hilary Rosen, a floppy puppet, and others who got us where we are today

128 **EIGHT NOTED WRITERS ON A DEFINING NET MOMENT**
Web epiphanies from William F. Buckley Jr., Zadie Smith, Timothy Ferris, Ha Jin, Russell Banks, Pico Iyer, Sue Miller, and Christopher Buckley EDITED BY LARRY SMITH

140 ***YAHOO! INTERNET LIFEFORM: Y-LIFE* IN 2006**
After the coming robot takeover, what will you and your fellow non-droids be doing online? Read all about it...then fill out our renewal card BY MODERN HUMORIST



86 Mistachuck raps on the Net

122 Freaks and geeks

102 A regular cutup

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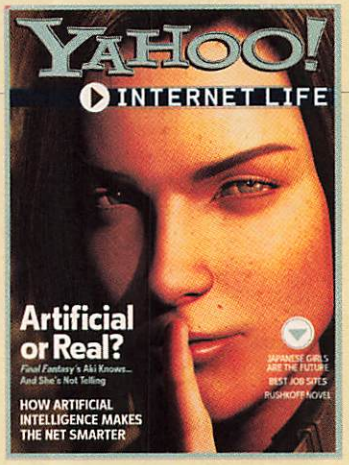
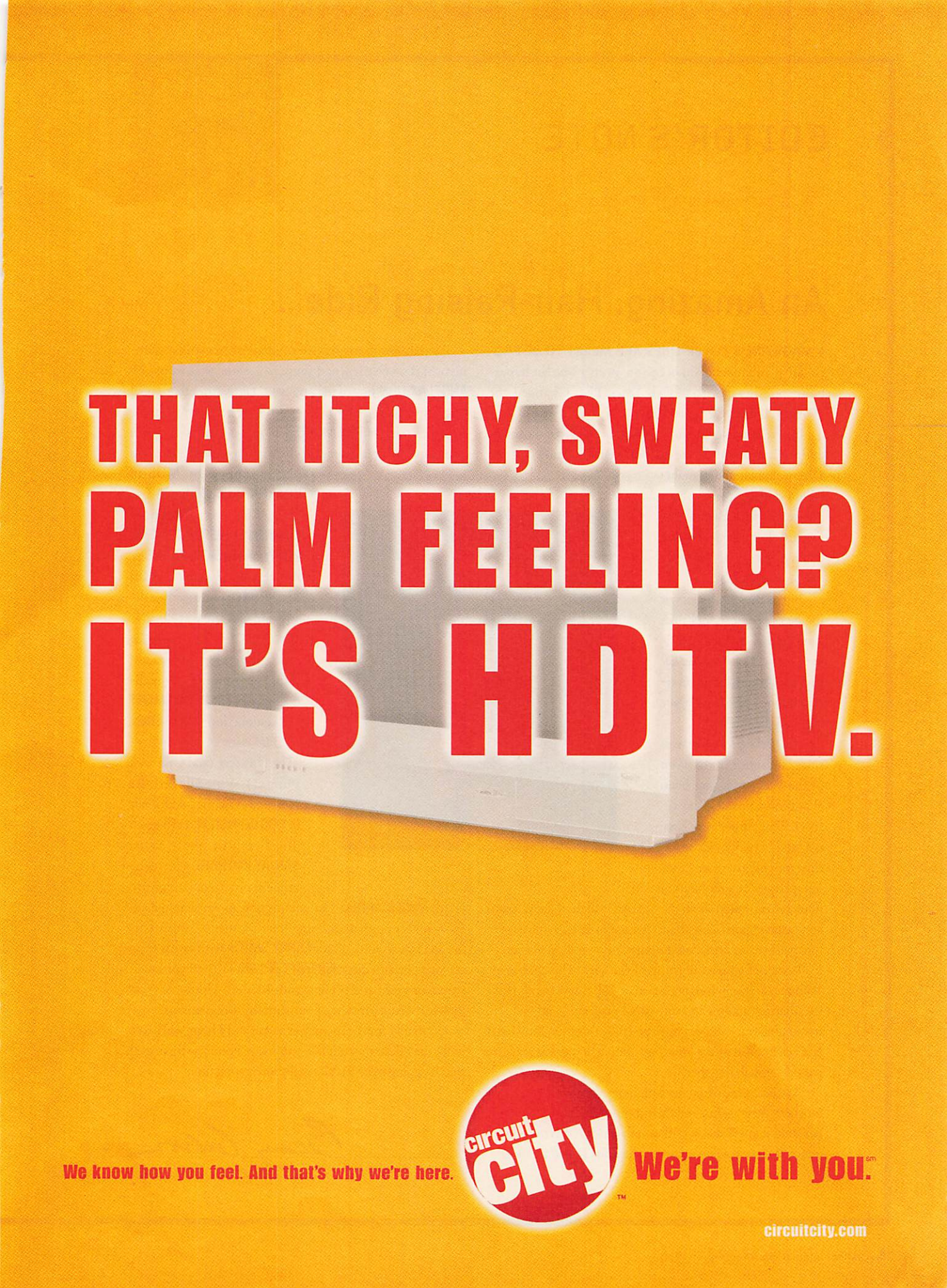
Read the Web, Write the Web

Last month, *Y-Life* printed an excerpt from Douglas Rushkoff's new novel *Exit Strategy*, a fast-forward skewering of Silicon Alley, Wall Street, and early 21st-century cybercapitalism. Over at **YIL.com**, we're serializing the entire novel, releasing a new chapter each week. And we know what you're thinking. So what? This is the Web. Do something new, something exciting, something different, something interesting, something visionary. Push some boundaries, for Pete's sake. Okay, you want boundaries? You want pushing? *Exit Strategy* is the world's first open-source novel. That means you, the reader, are invited to help create it in an ongoing, dynamic process that could very well redefine the concept of *book* as we know it (and if not, we'll at least have a lot of fun trying). Get the whole scoop over at **yil.com/exitstrategy**; then give us the lowdown on how the future really happened. Well? What are you waiting for? The Web isn't going to write itself!

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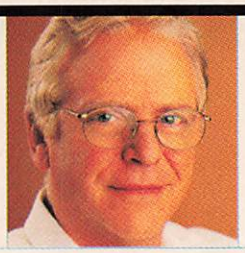

An Amazing, Hair-Raising Ride...

A MAGAZINE'S COVER LINES ARE MEANT TO BE PRO-vocative and maybe, on occasion, even a wee bit hyperbolic. So, this month's "Five Years That Changed the World." Truth? Or more hype?

It's a reasonable question, especially in light of the most-definitely-true *pop* of the hot-air spheroid known as the Internet bubble and its multibillion-dollar paper fortunes. A case can be made that this fine little how-de-do was due in large part to the influence of one thing: hype.

But as the chroniclers of the Net's people, rather than its entrepreneurs and profiteers, we at *Yahoo! Internet Life* have a fair record for not overstating the case. So, come again: changed the world?

Yes, I believe so. In the years since our launch, at the dawn of the Web, lives have been changed in almost every respect. This anniversary issue is a kind of yearbook chronicling the effect of those times. Yet it comes at a moment of immense confusion about the Net. After all the inflated claims and deflated portfolios, there's a sense of disenchantment in the mainstream press, as if to suggest it was all an illusion.

It was, of course, nothing of the sort. The changes—Web sites and search engines, e-mail, MP3s and Napster-like file-sharing, and on and on—were profound and will last, woven into our everyday lives. So enjoy this issue for what it is: a celebration of the amazing, often hair-raising years we passed through together.

At Oscar time we put up with movie stars who thank their mothers, their agents, and their spouses (if they can remember their names). Now I ask you to put up with me while I gratefully attach a few names to this issue's main themes.

We begin with an overview of what our Net ethics columnist thinks we've learned these five years; that would be **ANGELA GUNN**, one of the original *Y-Life*rs. After that, you'll find a special State of the Net 2001 section, put together by senior editor **CREE McCREE**, in lieu of our Web Guide this month. Our fashion spread—with an e-mail twist—was photographed by **MOSHE BRAKHA**, and produced and written by the style team of **WARREN CHRISTOPHER**, **GAIL HENRY**, and **MEAGHAN O'NEILL**. Another *Y-Life* pioneer, **RON BEL BRUNO**, put together the self-retrospective we call "This Was Our *Y-Life*." Our list of the Net's greatest hits and loudest flops was compiled by technology editor **DON WILLMOTT** and senior editor **BILGE EBIRI**.

The issue's party favor—"The 17 People (and One Sock Puppet) Who Shaped the Net"—was helmed editorially by **ROB BERNSTEIN**, and finessed into being by photo artist **SANJAY KOTHARI**, with assistance from associate photo editor **MIKE MANDEL**. The next section, in which noted authors reflect on their defining "Net Moments," was spearheaded by executive editor **LARRY SMITH**, with assists from senior associate editor **JEREMY CAPLAN**. We end our inquisition into past and present with Modern Humorist's wry look forward: a preview of our 10th-anniversary issue.

So thanks for the memories so far, and I hope you'll join us for the ride to the next five-year mark. I promise (no hype!) that it's going to be a really, really interesting time.

X Barry Golson

BARRY GOLSON, EDITOR IN CHIEF

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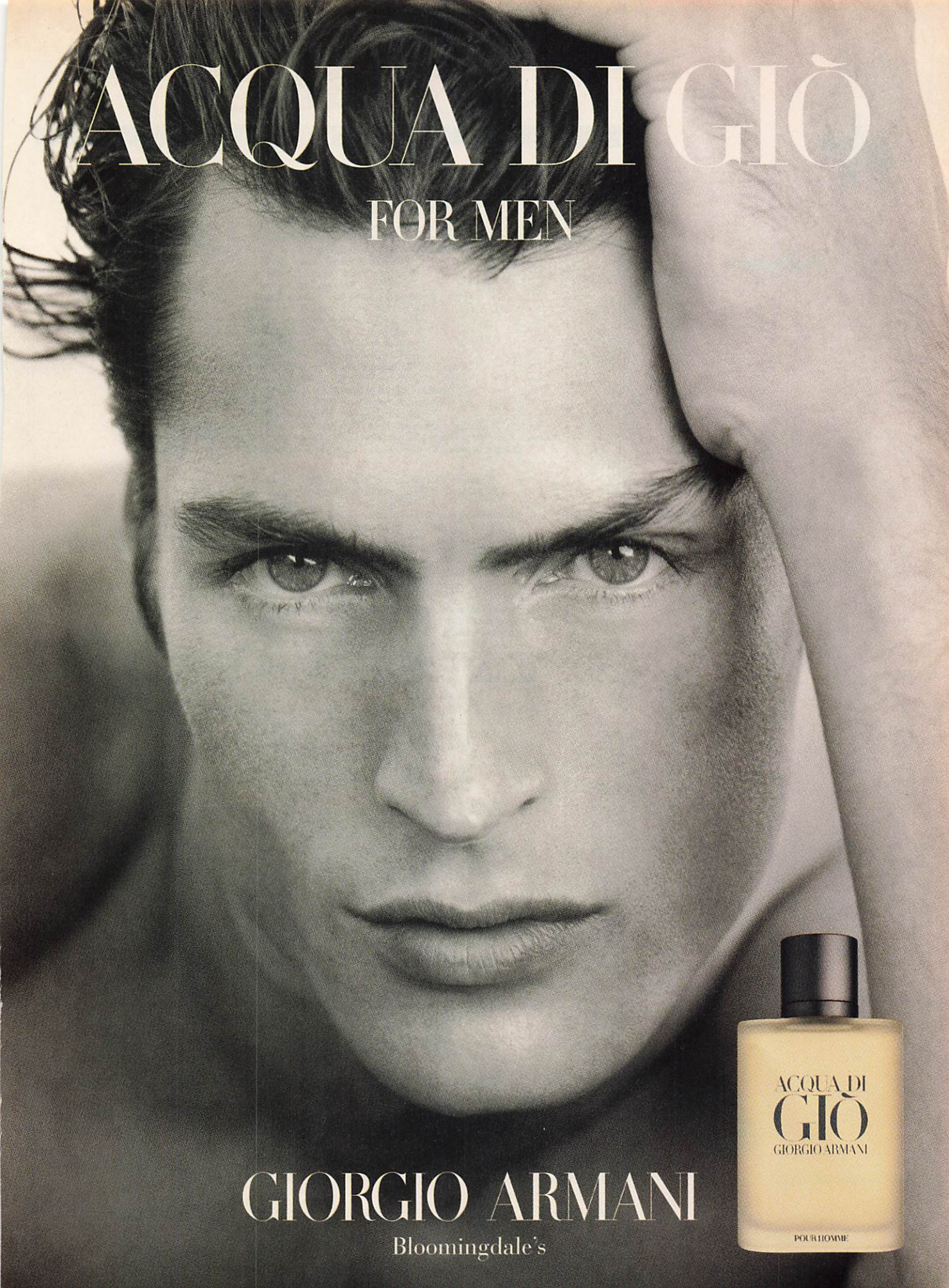
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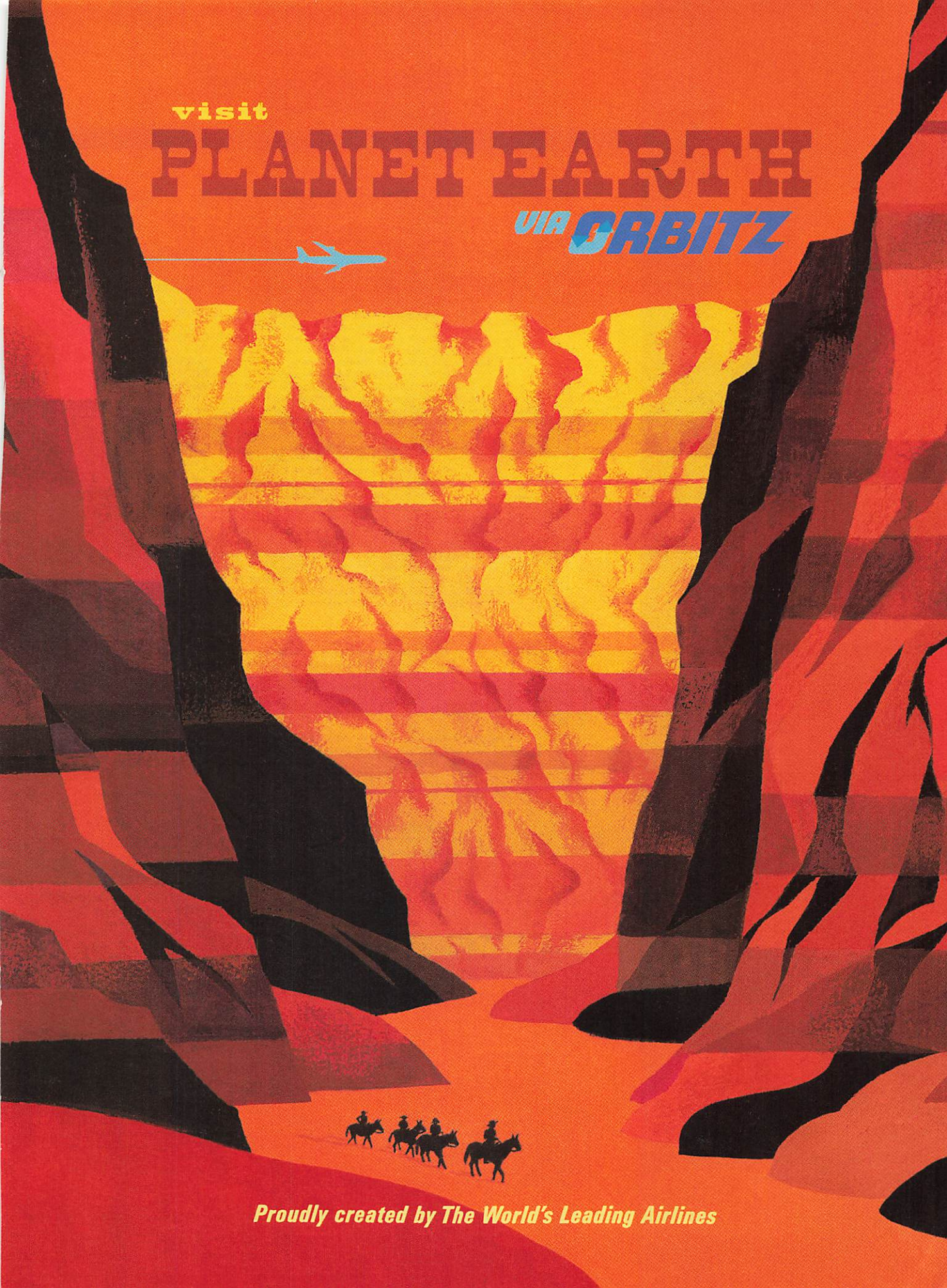
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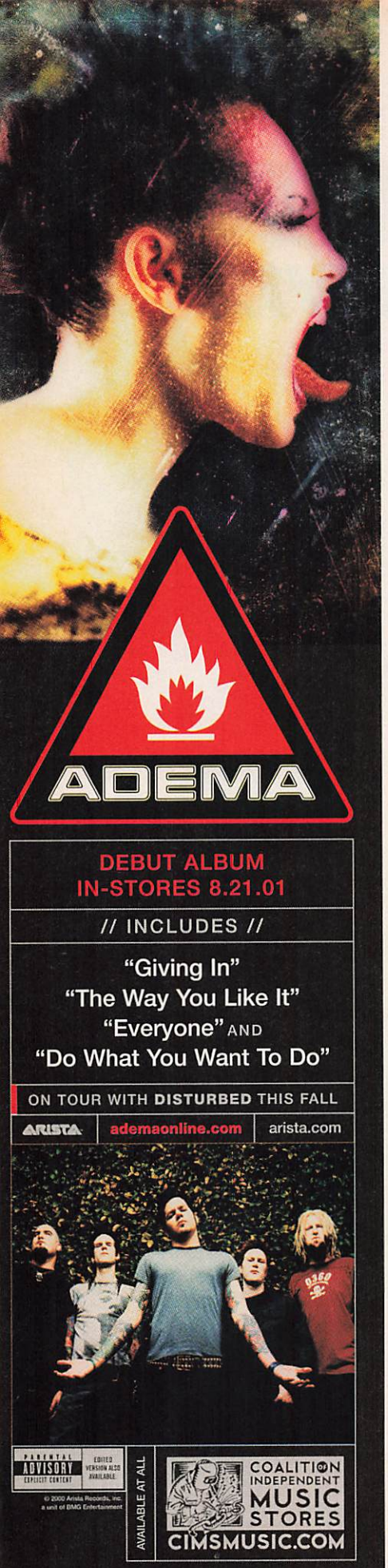

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WHO SAYS PRINT ISN'T INTERACTIVE?

Letters to the editor: Write to yilmail@ziffdavis.com

A NET NOD

"The People's Net," by Douglas Rushkoff [July '01, page 78], was simply the most dead-on, astute article I've read about the post–dot-com gold-rush era. I've always felt media coverage about the "rise and fall" of the Internet was off target. Perhaps now we can rediscover what originally appealed to us about the Net—namely, that it is a powerful means to communicate and create a global community.

After reading the article, I reflected on the success of my personal Web site—a success based not on revenue or a juggernaut IPO, but on connecting with people. Rushkoff is right: The Internet is back. However, for many of us, it never went away.

SCOTT ROEBEN
@dribbleglass.com

BUSINESS CLASS

Two cheers for Mr. Rushkoff's "The People's Net," an excellent cover story that provided a veteran's insight and keen understanding. Maybe that's why I was so disappointed with the author's utopian conclusion. Perhaps an attempt to neatly wrap up the story, it came off as too convenient. Furthermore, I disagree with Rushkoff's attempt to paint e-commerce as "an investment charade." Please.

True, big bad business changed an unspoiled and close-knit community into a different kind of cyberculture. Moreover, I agree that e-commerce had a negative influence on aspects of the Net, but one cannot dispute its defining role in spreading the Internet worldwide. While it originally grew out of a shared vision and collaborative imagination, the Internet matured and gained mass acceptance and credibility through e-commerce.

JONATHAN OSMUNDSEN
@aol.com

A.I. + HER

Ack!! I can't eat, I can't sleep, I can't function until I know who killed Evan Chan ["A.I. + I," July '01, page 85]. Darn you, *darn you* for publishing a piece about the *A.I.* mystery! I don't want it to ever end! Must...solve...next... puzzle...zzzzzzzzz....

JENNIFER MARSHFIELD
@aol.com

SOBERING STORY

Joanna Chen's "Fatal Liaison" [July '01, page 94] cut through my heart like a knife and nearly brought me to tears. I am a 40-year-old man who painfully remembers being a shy and timid 16-year-old. Chen's account was extremely objective, sensitive, and nonjudgmental, and I applaud the courage of *Y-Life* for printing such an important article. It is a sobering commentary on the power of the Internet both to delight and to deceive.

DAVID GONZALEZ
@onebox.com

FOR THE RECORD

Joanna Chen's overall informative and interesting article misled readers on a couple of points. First, the reporter repeats without challenge the Palestinian claim that Isam Judeh was tortured to death by Israelis, "including some particularly brutal treatment with a red-hot iron." Yet the facts are emphatically otherwise. Physicians for Human Rights conducted an exhaustive investigation into the circumstances of Judeh's death and concluded that he died in a car accident. Chen should have made this point clear.

Also, Chen's identification of Palestinian violence as "violent demonstration against Israeli occupation" miscasts the nature of the recent crisis. Obscured in such language, for one, is the fact that nearly 100 percent of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza live under the Palestinian Authority, not under Israeli rule.

TAMAR STERNTHAL
Senior Research Analyst
CAMERA: The Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America
@camera.org

Joanna Chen replies: If Tamar Sternthal had read my article less selectively, she would have noticed that I wrote "reportedly being tortured by Israelis." I hardly think this constitutes reporting "without challenge," as Sternthal suggests. I am merely stating the facts as Muna saw them.

Sternthal similarly distorts the map of the Oslo Accords, forgetting that Israel is still the main power in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, able to open and close roads and cities at its discretion.

You talkin' to us? We hope so! Write to yilmail@ziffdavis.com.

SITE GAG

"It can download entire novels, surf the Net, do e-mail, get real-time stock quotes, shop for groceries, buy me a new car, and cook my dinner. But mostly I just use it to see what time it is."

YIL.COMMENTS

Opinions are still pouring in about **YIL.com**'s new look...

» "I like the new look and feel...the old one was so...old!"

» "The old one had a better layout. The new one is cluttered."

» "I like the new YIL site. It's much better and more sophisticated."

» "The old site felt comfy, like your favorite sweater on a cool evening. Now I feel like I should wear a tuxedo."

» "You look smashing in a tuxedo!!"

Got something to say? Say it loud on YIL.com's message boards.

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The white water in the river.

The white lettering on the paddle.

The white splash of sunlight on the helmet.

The white knuckles on the fingers.

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People, Places, and Trends on the Net >>> Edited by Ron Bel Bruno

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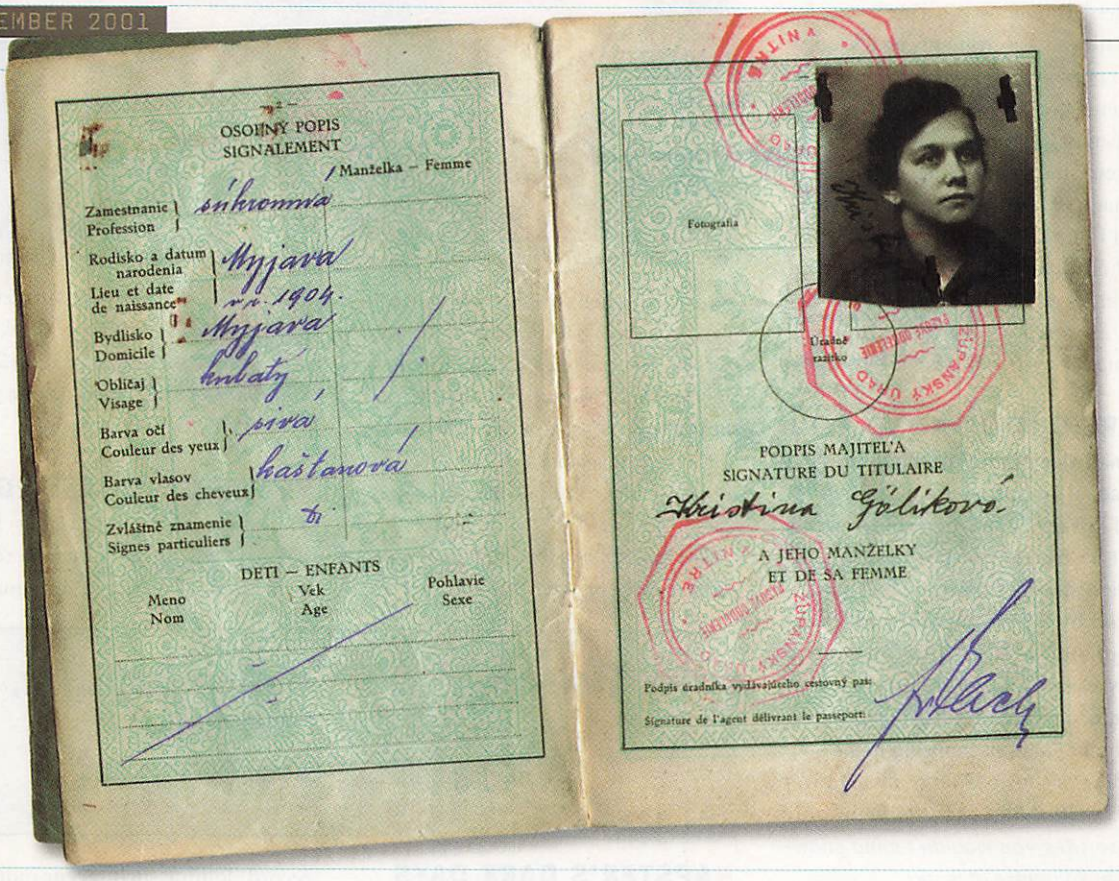

ELLIS ISLAND COMES ALIVE

Of course you've never heard of Nicola Iacocca or Pasquale Leno. But before their descendants became titans of the auto industry and late-night television, these men arrived as immigrants at New York's Ellis Island. Now you can unearth the details of others' transatlantic passage at the **American Family Immigration History Center [ellisislandrecords.org]**, thanks to the Herculean development efforts of the Church of Latter-day Saints, which through this project continues its commitment to genealogical research. As you hunt for Great-Grandpa in a database of more than 22 million arrivals between 1892 and 1924, you'll be among the masses; the site greeted 1.9 million visitors in its first full month of operation, placing it second on Jupiter Media Metrix's Top Newcomers Chart. And hey, next time you find yourself griping about that middle coach seat on the way to Paris, think about the cramped conditions Great-Grandpa endured on *his* trip. **MEAGHAN O'NEILL**

32 THERE'S A BIG BASH IN BLACK ROCK THIS MONTH. WE DECONSTRUCT THE AMAZING HISTORY OF NEVADA'S **BURNING MAN**.

34 KEEP THE IN-LAWS AT BAY: THESE **PHONE-ANSWERING SERVICES** CAN TAKE A MESSAGE WHILE YOU SURF—ALL ON A SINGLE LINE.

36 LOOKING EASTWARD FOR INNER PEACE? WANT TO FENG-SHUI YOUR OFFICE? HOW-TO SITE **SOYOUWANNA.COM** SHOWS YOU THE WAY.

COURTESY OF THE STATUE OF LIBERTY–ELLIS ISLAND FOUNDATION, INC.

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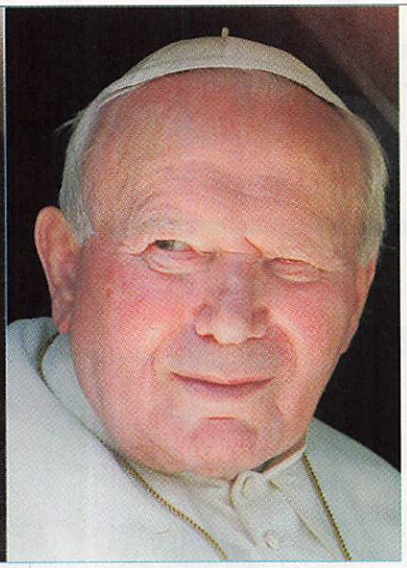
Net Briefs



HAIL TO THE CHIEFS? Winfrey and Pope John Paul II top surfers' list of preferred Net governors.

GOVERNOR 'O'

A new study from the Markle Foundation reveals that Americans want tighter Net regulation. The report's respondents expressed an almost equal preference for private and government regulation to curb pornography and violence online. When asked who should serve on a hypothetical Internet Board of Governors, however, the group was more surefooted, casting a strong preference for Pope John Paul II, Oprah Winfrey, and Bill Gates.

So? *Enforcing Net regulations is inherently problematic. And not even Oprah could or, we suspect, would trump the First Amendment.*

HERE'S LOOKING AT YOU

Think twice before placing an online personal ad from your office PC. A recent Privacy Foundation study reveals that 35 percent of the nation's 40 million at-work surfers are being monitored by their companies for inappropriate Net use. Why? Tracking is easy, cheap, and can detect the swapping of dirty jokes, salacious pictures, and other lawsuit-inducing items.

So? *Get a copy of your company's Net policy—if it has one—and surf only those sites you wouldn't mind showing anyone else at work.*

X, RATED

If you surfed the Web at all this summer, you likely found yourself dumped at the doorstep of **X10 [x10.com]**, pondering David Byrne's eternal question, "How did I get here?" X10 Home Solutions, the Web cam maker that operates the e-commerce site, purchased countless "pop-under" ad spots at some of the Web's best-known addresses, including **The New York Times [nytimes.com]**. These ads reside behind the page you've requested; when you close out that top page, up comes X10. Because of this wily setup, X10 ranked No. 1 on a recent Jupiter Media Metrix e-commerce traffic list. In response to angry surfers staging a boycott against the company, X10 now provides a 30-day opt-out feature on the ads, via a link on its site.

So? *Want to quell a Web nuisance? Voting with your wallet seems to work.*

'He used to be a nice brother. But then he fell in love with the Internet'

—THE SISTER OF A CHINESE YOUTH WHO DIED AFTER TUMBLING FOUR STORIES TRYING TO SNEAK OUT TO A NET CAFÉ

NAPSTER'S DARK DAYS

Two weeks after Napster went offline in early July, reports began to surface that the file-sharing network planned to abandon MP3 in favor of a secure proprietary format as it retooled to accommodate a new fee-based service. By the time Napster went dark, the average number of songs being shared by each user had plunged from 220 to 1.5. One bright spot: Cable-TV programmer Starz Encore is considering a dramatization of Napster's rise and fall.

So? *As Napster refugees flock to such alternative free-music services as* **Audiogalaxy [audiogalaxy.com], Aimster [aimster.com]** *and* **BearShare [bearshare.com]**, *we're asking: Who gets to play Shawn Fanning?*

NET LINGO GOES LEGIT

The editors of the *Oxford English Dictionary* have added yet more Net-related terms to our language's dictionary of record. Joining such recent inductees as *dotcom* and *webcam* are geek mainstays *cybersex* and *spam*, as well as the au courant *MP3*. For now, however, you'll have to settle for viewing these new entries in the dictionary's subscription-based Web version: The publisher won't be releasing a printed update of the 1928 edition for about 10 years.

So? *Our beloved gibberish is now simply English.*

THE CLICK AROUND THE NET CLIQUE: MEGAN GERRITY, CHRIS HARRIS, MEAGHAN O'NEILL, JOSH ROBERTSON, LARRY SMITH. WRITE TO CLICK AT CLICK@ZIFFDAVIS.COM

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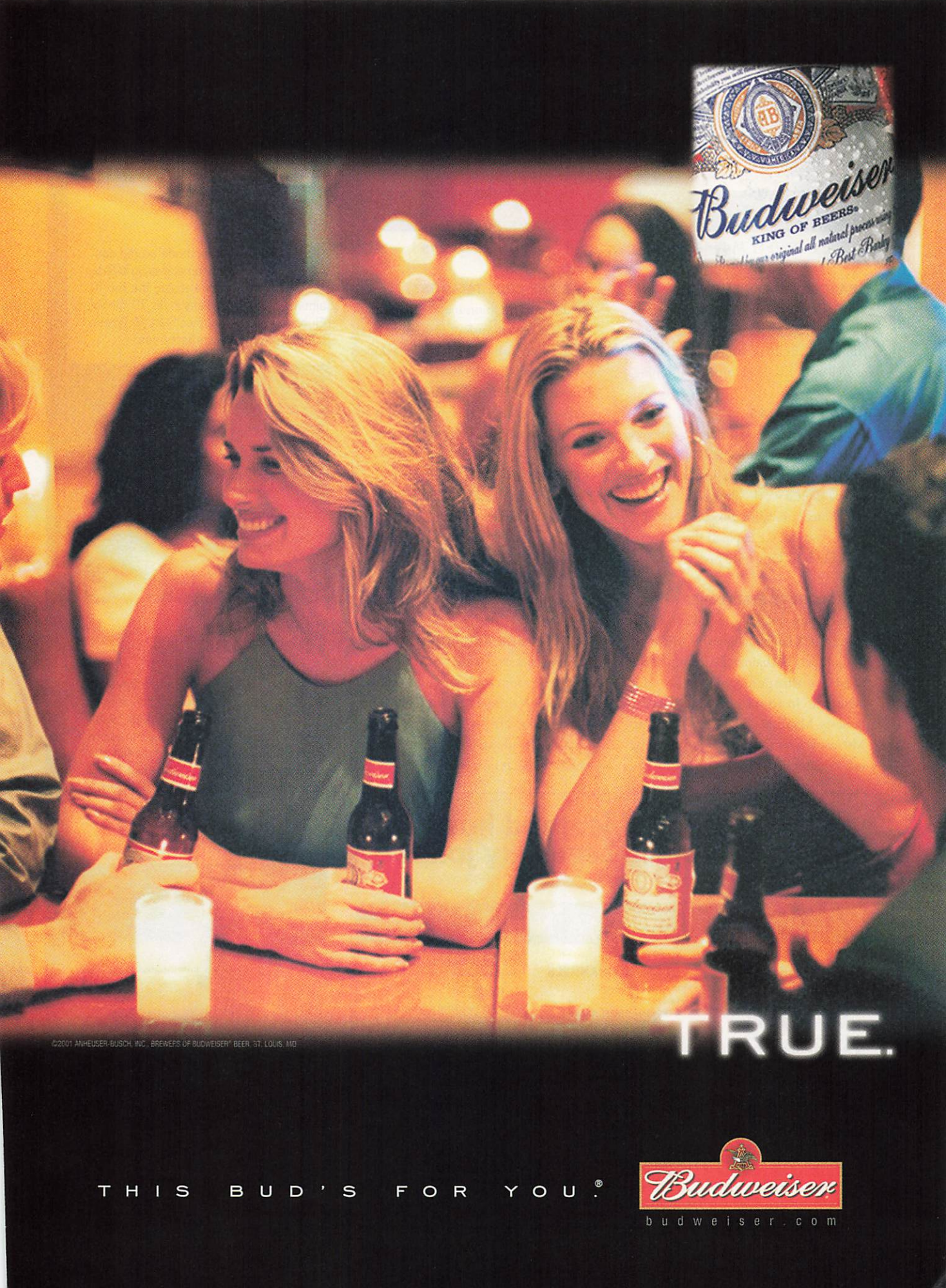

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GRANOLA SNACKS FOR ALL

When hacker Adrian Lamo found a hole in Excite@Home's security, he told the company how to fix the problem. Props to Lamo, as well as to Excite@Home for listening.

PAGE-SCROLLERS

Do you have trouble considering e-books and online literature legit? The National Book Foundation doesn't. In fact, it's evaluating digital works alongside those of the printed variety for this year's National Book Awards. We applaud the recognition, but how long until one *wins*?

A MICROSOFT STAPLE DIES

While death is usually a somber subject, we can't help but be ecstatic that Microsoft has publicly euthanized Clippy, the intrusive anthropomorphic paper-clip "assistant." In a display of unprecedented honesty, Microsoft calls Clippy "next to Microsoft Bob, the most annoying thing in computer history."

NEXT: BAR-CODE TATTOOS?

The European Union may begin asking its ISPs to keep records of customers' Net doings (from surfing to e-mail) for as long as seven years. Condemned by ICANN chairman and Net elder statesman Vint Cerf as impractical, this move is also at odds with established privacy laws.

TAKE THAT, WORLD

The California state assembly approved a bill that makes it a crime to run a gambling site (from anywhere) at which Californians can play. What's next: U.K. lawmakers making it illegal to manufacture firearms—unless they're Brit-proof?

TWO WRONGS AND COUNTING...

Noped, a hacker-hatched worm file, sniffs hard drives for child porn and reports findings directly to the police. Child porn is bad, but so are vigilante viruses. Police have already agreed to discount any such findings as unreliable.

'I just [recently] learned how to forward Monica Lewinsky jokes'

FORMER PRESIDENT GEORGE BUSH, TO AN AUDIENCE AT GIGAWORLD I.T. FORUM 2001

Top of the Net

WEB TOPPERS

The most popular sites among Web surfers...*

1	YAHOO.COM	55.1**
2	MSN.COM	50.7
3	AOL.COM	36.2
4	MICROSOFT.COM	33.3
5	PASSPORT.COM	29.8

...and the top gainers.***

1	X10.COM (see p. 28)	87%
2	BMG MUSIC SERVICE	24%**
3	HARRIS INTERACTIVE	23%**
4	MONSTER.COM SITES	23%**
5	RANKYOU.COM SITES	23%**

*Unique visitors, in millions, during May
**Aggregated sites
***Percent growth in unique visitors from April to May
Jupiter Media Metrix [jmm.com] measures the preferences of 60,000 Net surfers. Apparent ties are the result of rounding.

WIRELESS CHANNELS

The top picks at AvantGo [avantgo.com].

1 THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
2 CNN
3 YAHOO!
4 THE WEATHER CHANNEL
5 THE NEW YORK TIMES

Rankings reflect May popularity.

MUSIC

The top CD sales online, as tallied by NMC: Net Music Countdown [netmusiccountdown.com].

1 **SONGBIRD,** Eva Cassidy
2 **LIVE AT BLUES ALLEY,** Eva Cassidy
3 **REVEAL,** R.E.M.
4 **TIME* SEX* LOVE*,** Mary Chapin Carpenter
5 **BREAK THE CYCLE,** Staind

Rankings reflect sales for week ending 6/29.

CHATS

The best-attended get-togethers at Yahoo! Chat [chat.yahoo.com].

1 **O-TOWN,** boy band on ABC-TV's *Making the Band* [6/15]
2 **O-TOWN** [6/22]
3 **O-TOWN** [6/29]
4 **O-TOWN** [6/8]
5 **BLINK-182,** punk rock trio [6/11]
6 **PEPPER SCHWARTZ,** love and sex expert [6/21]
7 **PABLO,** star of PBS-TV's *American High* [6/13]
8 **PEPPER SCHWARTZ** [6/7]
9 **PEPPER SCHWARTZ** [6/14]
10 **TRISHA YEARWOOD,** country music chanteuse [6/11]

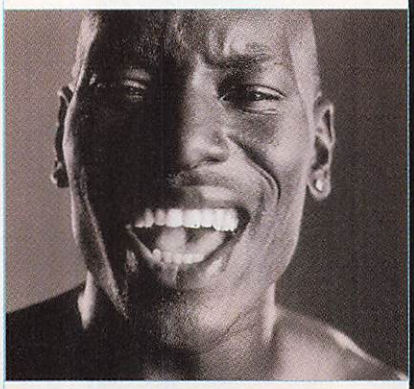
Rankings reflect June chat attendance.

netobsessions

The Guy

TYRESE

The former model scored double this summer, starring in *Baby Boy* and releasing the Top 10 album *2000 Watts*. Fans in his 20 Yahoo! Clubs couldn't be happier. Start @ **Tyrese [clubs.yahoo.com/clubs/tyrese]**



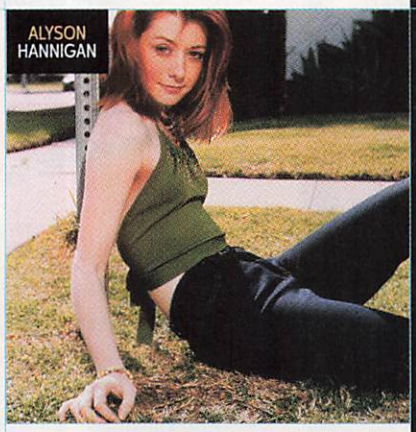
The Thing

STICK FIGURES

Why such animosity toward a line drawing? Ask the animators behind the 20-plus "death to stick figures" sites. The fare runs from basic four-second snuff films to martial-arts masterpieces. Start @ **XiaoXiao No. 3 [games.sohu.com/fightgame/fight3.swf]**

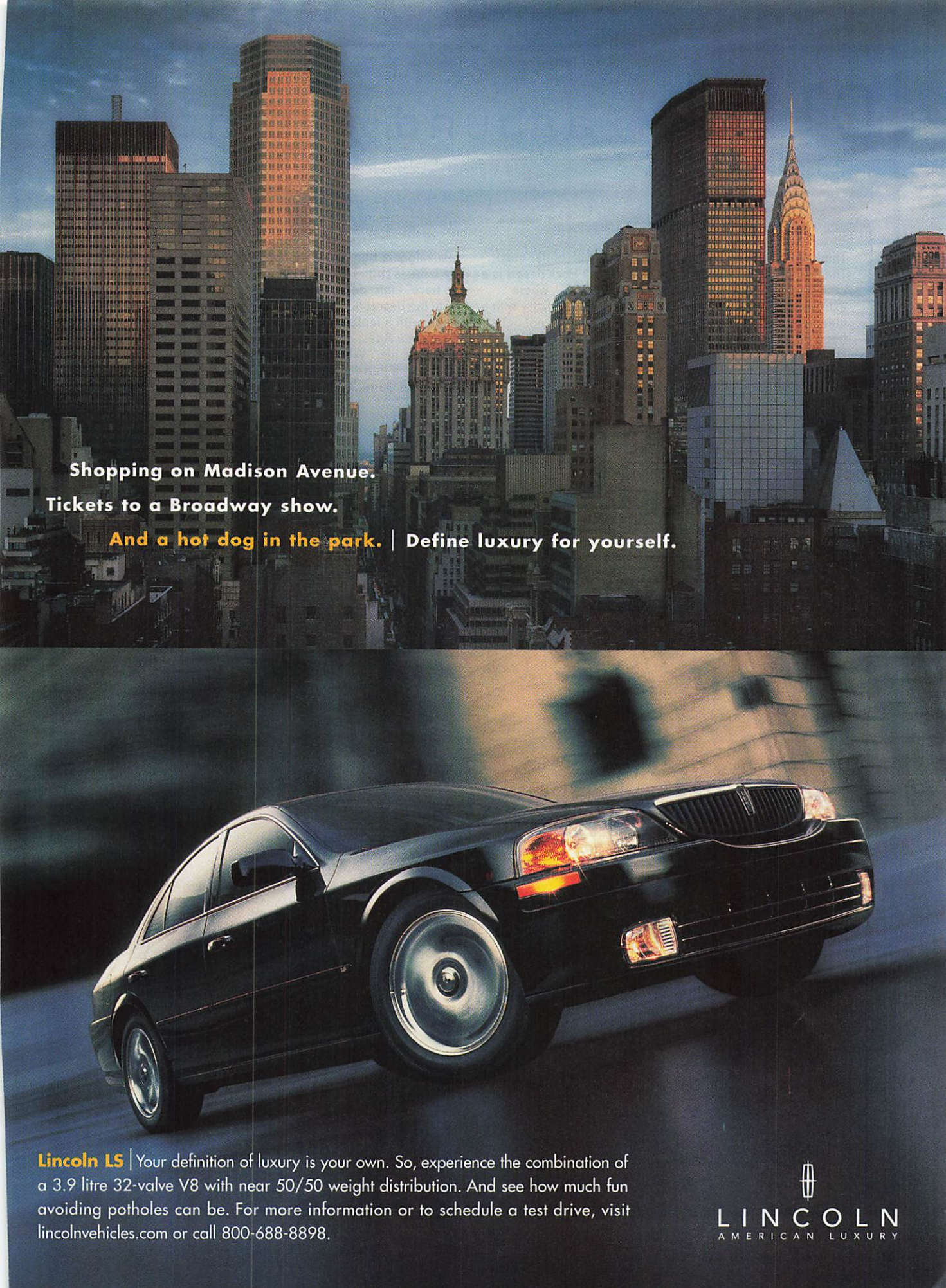
The Girl

ALYSON HANNIGAN



The randy band-camp alumna returns this fall in *American Pie 2*, then as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer's* witchy Willow. Start @ **Hannigan Online [alyson-hannigan.org]**

TYRESE: KWAKU ALSTON/CORBIS OUTLINE; HANNIGAN: ISABEL SYNDER/CORBIS OUTLINE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LINCOLN
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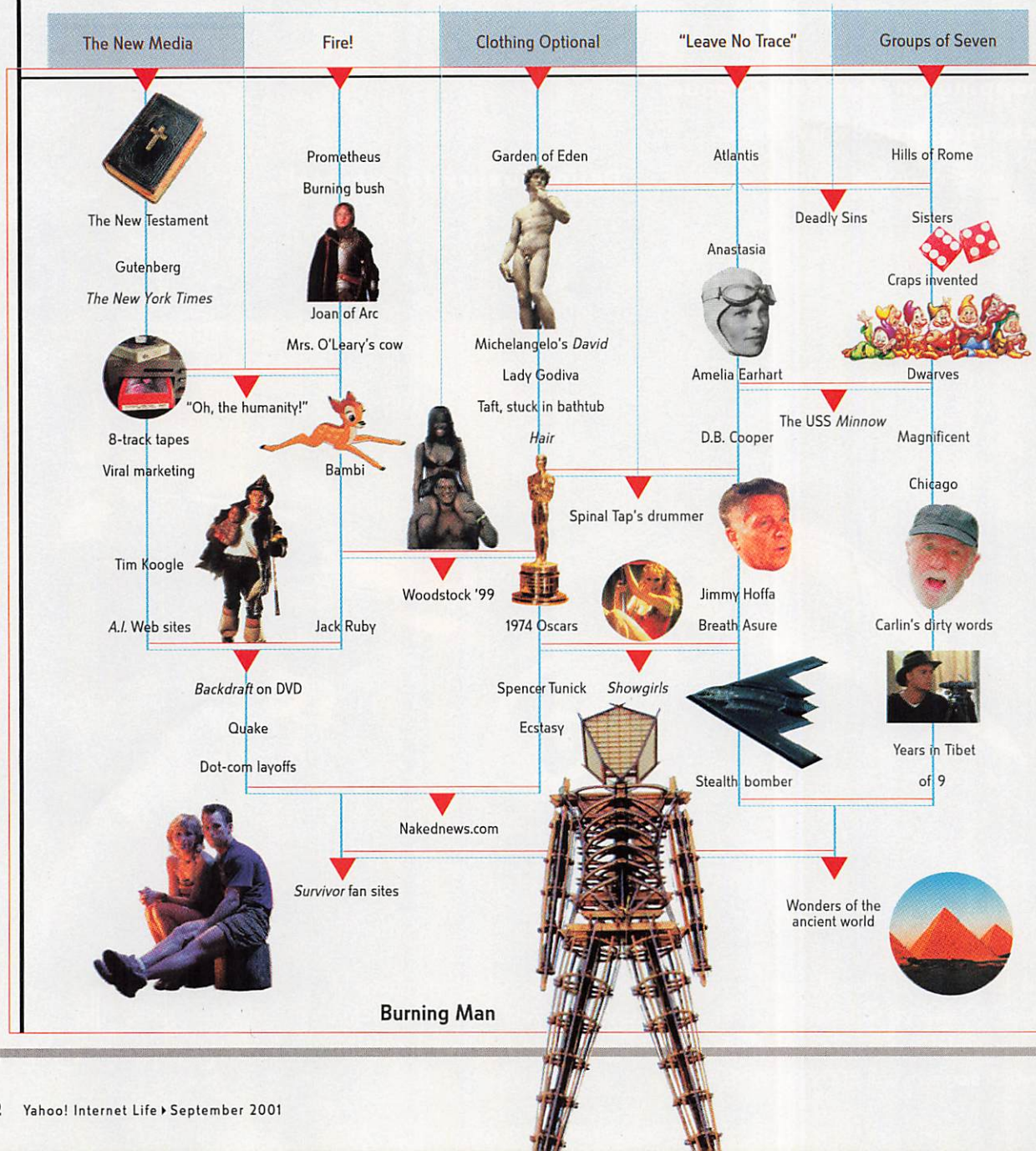
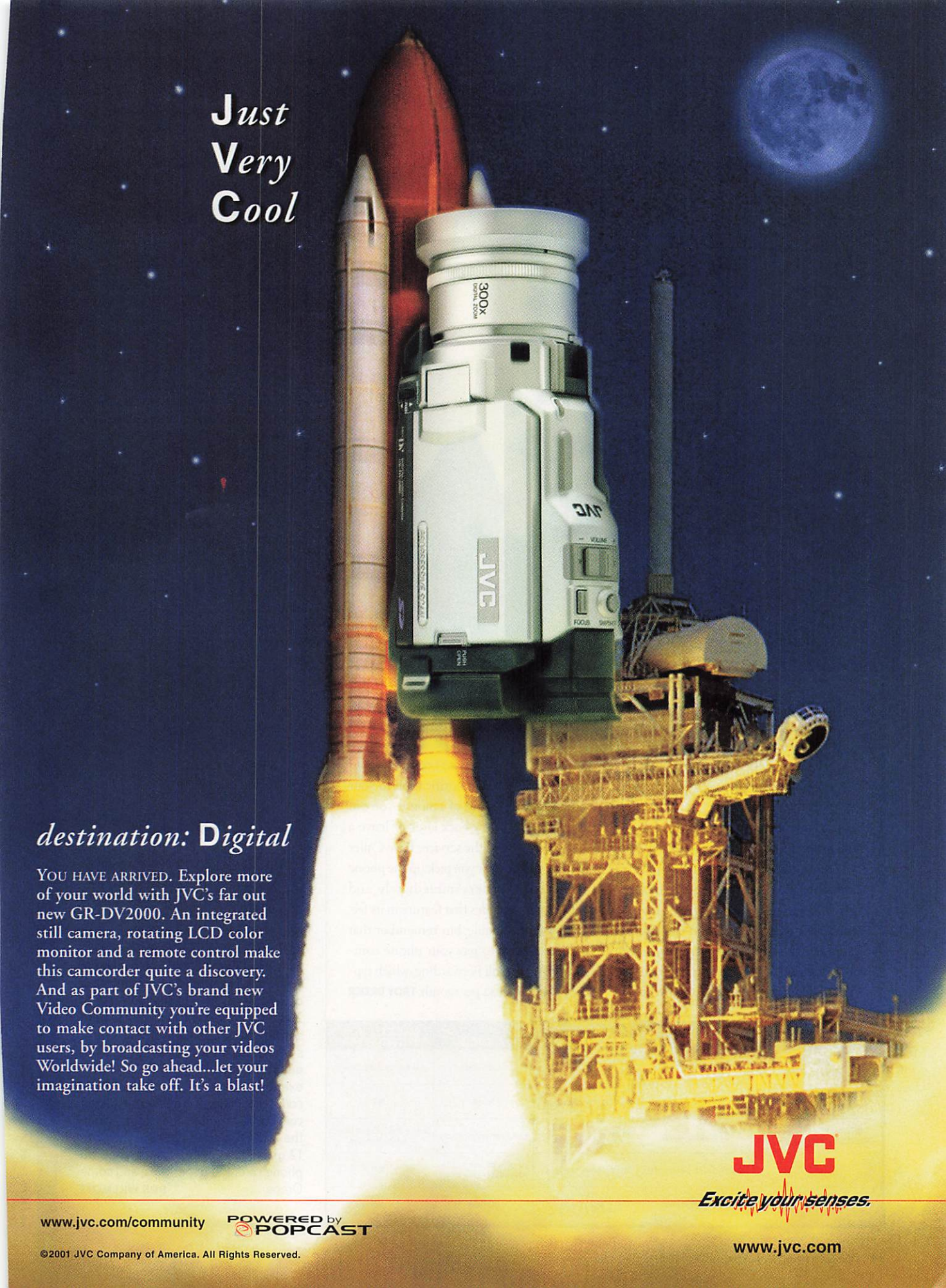
The Tree ■ The Past Lives of Burning Man

Think of it as the world's largest rave, but with better music. The Burning Man festival in Nevada's Black Rock desert is a cash-free, organically built community of 25,000, where extroverts flaunt their individuality and techno-artistry with a little help from their friends. And though you may not get a beep out of your Blackberry in this remote playa, the Labor Day weekend gathering is certainly Web-enabled. Burning Man participants use the Net to sell tickets, organize theme camps, and trade heatstroke tips. At the event's climax, festivalgoers burn a giant wood-and-neon figure because, well, fire is cool. Then, according to the gathering's "leave no trace" ethic, departing souls remove every last sequin from the desert floor, till it's pristine as a failed dot-com office with a fantastic cleaning lady. This year's theme is the Seven Ages, a cosmic journey through "the successive stages of life." Whatever, man. As long as we're tripping, let's take a journey of our own and discover the secret origins of Burning Man. **CHRIS HARRIS AND LARRY SMITH**



8-TRACK TAPES: AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS; *SURVIVOR*: AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS; *BACKDRAFT*: FOTO FANTASIES; JOAN OF ARC (LEELEE SOBIESKI): AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS; BAMBI: FOTO FANTASIES; *DAVID*: GLOBE; *SHOWGIRLS*: FOTO FANTASIES; OSCAR: CORBIS BETTMANN; BURNING MAN: APF/CORBIS; EARHART: AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS; HOFFA: AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS; DWARVES: FOTO FANTASIES; PITT: FOTO FANTASIES; CARLIN: AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS; PYRAMIDS: ROGER RESSMEYER/CORBIS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LET THE NET DO IT BETTER

SAVE TIME

HOLD THE PHONE

ARE YOUR FRIENDS TRYING TO REACH YOU? PUT CALL-WAITING ON YOUR PC

If you have just one phone line, you know the problem: You can't receive calls while you're on the Web. Sure, you can use an answering machine or service, but you won't get your messages until you're offline.

That's where Net-based call-waiting comes in. It lets you know via an on-screen alert when you're receiving a phone call: Your local phone company redirects incoming calls to the service's computer, and it immediately sends notification to your screen. With the click of a mouse, you can ask the caller to try back later or leave a voice message. All the services have Caller ID, but only two let you pick up the phone and speak to callers immediately, and only BuzMe includes that feature in its fee. Costs are reasonable, but remember that you'll also have to pay your phone company for Busy Call Forwarding, which typically costs about $2 per month. **TROY DREIER**

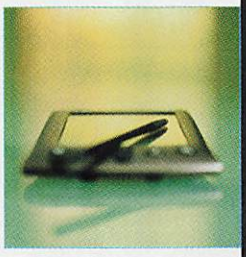
SERVICE	PRICE	PLATFORMS	FREE TRIAL	"TAKE CALL NOW" MINUTES PROVIDED
BUZME! (BUZME.COM)	$5.95 per month (free with ads)	Windows 95, 98, NT 4.0, 2000; MacOS 7.6 and up	Seven days	60 minutes per month
CALLWAVE (CALLWAVE.COM)	Free	All Windows versions	None	NA
INTERNETCALLMANAGER (INTERNETCALLMANAGER.COM)	$5.95 per month	All Windows versions; MacOS 8.6 to 9.1	Eight call notifications	Starts at $2.95 per month for 30 minutes
ITRINGS! (ITRINGS.COM)	$3.95–$4.95 per month	All Windows versions	10 calls or one month, whichever comes first	NA
PAGOO (PAGOO.COM)	$4.95 per month	Windows 95, 98, NT; MacOS 7.6 to 9.1	30 days	NA

netsavers

PDA Paradise

SAVE TIME

The story's been the same all year long: Rapid innovations in handheld devices have forced Palm and its competitors to push down prices on older models to move them out and make room for the new ones. (Just $149 for a wireless Palm VII? Incredible.) And as Windows CE–based PDAs such as Compaq's iPAQ and HP's Jornada series continue to gain ground, your options have never been more diverse. Whether you're a new (or potential) PDA user or an old hand, it makes sense to drop by **Geek.com: PDAGeek (pdageek.com)** to see what's going on in the marketplace, how prices are tracking, and what people are saying about the newest models. Forums collect useful tips and tricks, as well as some entertaining horror stories. The latest PDA news and software reviews will keep the true aficionado up-to-date.

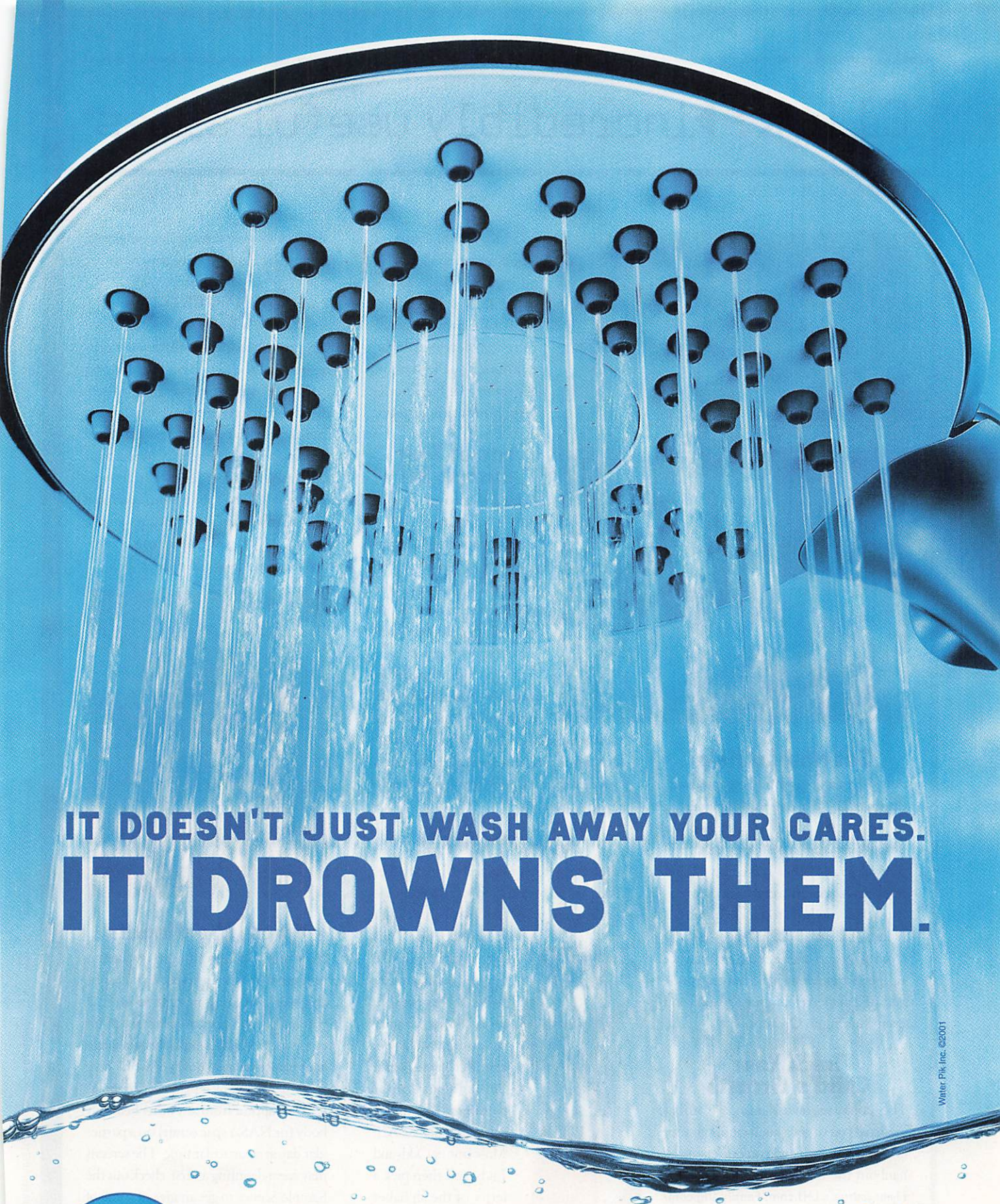


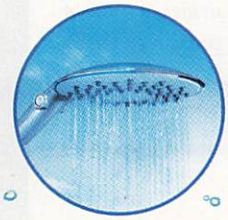
Show You Care

SAVE TIME

Generations of moms have filled shoe boxes with cookies, Bazooka bubble gum, socks, and other necessities and mailed them off to their kids at camp or in college. The tradition lives on at **CarePackages.com**, where you can save time by ordering up a quirky prefab care package in one of 20 categories. It will typically feature something plush, something funny, something useful, and something edible. The $35 Moving Relief Kit, for example, has a flashlight, duct tape, soap, chocolate, and a Blockbuster gift certificate, among other items, while the $28 Freshman package includes 12 gifts, such as stamps, a prepaid phone card, 150 paper clips, and some Oreos. **DON WILLMOTT**

WOMAN ON PHONE: MIGUEL S. SALMERON/FPG


IT DOESN'T JUST WASH AWAY YOUR CARES.
IT DROWNS THEM.
Water Pik Inc. ©2001



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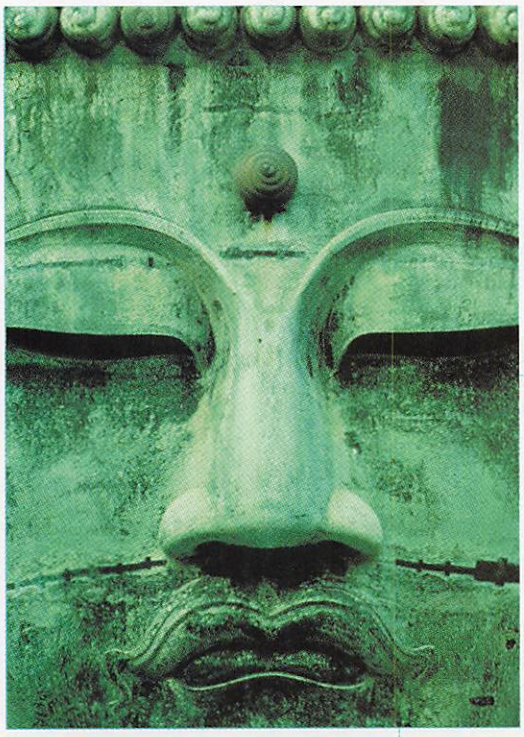
THIS MONTH'S MOST PRACTICAL DESTINATIONS BY RICHARD BUTNER



Get How-To Help

Any site that helps you convert to Buddhism in just five screens is obviously a model of clarity and brevity. Explore **SoYouWanna.com**, a destination that will remind you of other Incredibly Useful Sites, such as Learn2.com and eHow, as it teaches you how to tackle hundreds of life's little tasks and challenges. Choose a category and then a topic for instruction in activities such as shooting pool, getting a pet ferret, renting a tuxedo, and even winning an Oscar pool.

Track Your Child's Growth

They don't issue owner's manuals with babies, so if you've got a question about your little one's growth and you don't want to haul out the Dr. Spock book, try *Ladies' Home Journal*'s **LHJ.com: Family [lhj.com/family/parenting.html]**. It features growth and vaccination charts, as well as related articles. Click on the Grow, Baby, Grow time line to get specific information on milestones (physical, developmental, emotional), as well as on the shots your baby needs from birth to three years.

Lower Your Energy Bill

Who knows how high your power bill may go in the coming months, given all the dark predictions of politicians and power-company executives? Confront your energy costs (and their environmental impact, too) by using the **EnergyGuide: Analyze Your Use [energyguide.com/audit/webauditintro.asp]**. Answer the questions and you'll get an analysis of your energy usage, with steps you can take and products you can buy to lower your bills.

Name Your Pet

Unless you're a nostalgia buff, pet names such as Rover and Fido just don't do the trick. George W. Bush probably didn't spend much time coming up with the handle Spot for his dog. If you need a respectable moniker for a puppy or kitten, try **iVillage.com: Pet Name Finder [ivillage.com/pets/petnames]**. Choose by category, such as Art, Musicians, or Odds and Ends, and then pick a letter of the alphabet or a gender. You can also vote for your favorite here; when we stopped by, Rocky was the top choice.

Count Exercise Calories

Any experienced dieter will tell you: Keeping track of the calories in the food you eat is tedious and dispiriting. Try counting instead the calories you burn through exercise. To find out just how much energy you've used up, hit the calculator at **CaloriesPerHour.com**. Enter the activity, the duration, and your weight, and you'll get back the number of calories you've blasted. (Who knew that an hour of ironing burns about 150 calories?)

Watch the Planets

Now that you know it costs about $20 million to joyride into space, you probably won't be going anytime soon. So if you really crave an extraterrestrial point of view, try NASA's **Solar System Simulator [space.jpl.nasa.gov]**—it won't cost you a penny. View a planet or moon as it would appear from any other heavenly body (or NASA spac.ecraft) on a particular day, at a particular time. The screens may seem daunting at first; check out the Sample Scenes to get an idea of some of the cool perspectives you can generate.

SEND US NEWS OF YOUR USEFUL FIND! WRITE TO IUS@ZIFFDAVIS.COM

BUDDHA: CARLOS NAVAJAS/GETTYONE; BIRD: P. VAN GAALEN/PHOTONICA; WOMAN IRONING: KAREN BEARD/GETTYONE

Travel in Good Health

First-aid kits usually don't get much more sophisticated than bandages, aspirin, antibiotic cream, and, if you're lucky, sleeping pills. Online, however, you can find an entire virtual clinic. So before hitting the lonely backwoods or hopping on that plane, stop in at **TravelHealth [travelhealth.com]**, the health site for intrepid travelers. Register for free to locate clinics near where you'll be traveling, find out the local names for all your medications (if you have a cough in Paris, ask politely for *sirop de toux*), get sensible suggestions for travel insurance, and learn all about immunizations.

Find Stolen Stuff

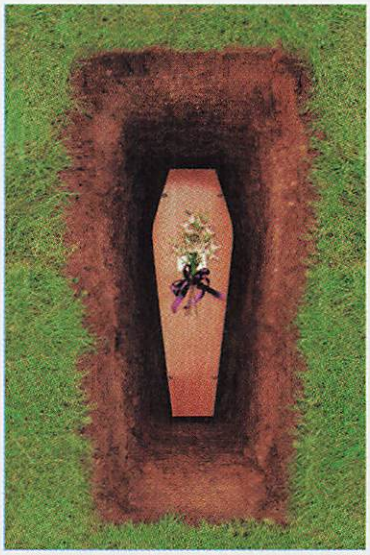
If your stereo and TV get ripped off, you'll be sorry you never wrote down their serial numbers. **Property Room: StealitBack [serial.stealitback.com]** gives you one more reason to take the trouble to record your hi-fi's vital statistics: The site cooperates with police property rooms, and with a sister site where recovered property is put on the auction block. Register and enter the serial numbers of your stolen items. If they turn up in any of the listed property rooms, they'll be returned to you rather than auctioned off immediately. Sure, it's something of a crapshoot, but it's worth a try if it could keep your insurance premiums from soaring through the roof.

Learn Math Graphically

If the mere thought of algebra or calculus makes you (or your kids) break out in hives, try a new approach to math: Play with the interactive tools at **ExploreMath.com**. First select a category (Conic Sections, Quadratics, Complex Numbers), and then a problem or tool to experiment with. The big advantage here is that animated equations show you visually how changing variables will alter the curve of an arc or the slope of a line. There's no doubt about it—seeing it live makes all the difference.

Provide for Your Heirs

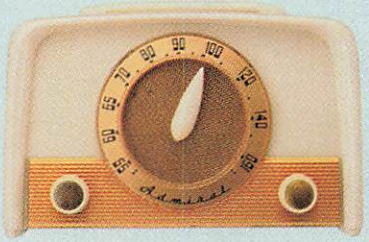
What better way to shuffle off this mortal coil than to make things simple for those you leave behind (and stop them from fighting over your valuables)? Write your own last testament with a minimum of fuss at **DoYourOwnWill.com**. Drafting a simple will here costs less than $10. Just follow the directions, wait for the hard copy to arrive, sign it with witnesses and a notary present, and you're good to...go.



...and downloads

TUNE IN TO NET RADIO

Thousands of radio stations around the world are streaming their signals onto the Net, and there are thousands of ways to find and listen to them. One of the simplest solutions: **WinFM [inklineglobal.net/products]**, an Internet radio player that lets you locate and flip between stations by just hitting Play. Its directory features stations from more than 100 countries, and all musical genres are represented. You can create your own playlist of favorite stations, too. *Free to try; $20 to register and $10 to add a backup disk.*



GET STRAIGHT A'S

You may have to be a bit of a Poindexter to take full advantage of **Kopernekan Revolution Student Planner 2 [kopernekus.com/downloads/sp_home.html]**, but the array of schedules, alerts, and reports included in the software makes it worth a try. For each class, you enter assignments and grades, exam dates and scores, and other information. Once all the info is in (you must update it regularly), start slicing and dicing to generate reports that track pending assignments, print monthly calendars highlighting due dates, and chart your attendance. *Free to try; $20 to buy.*

MANAGE YOUR PASSWORDS

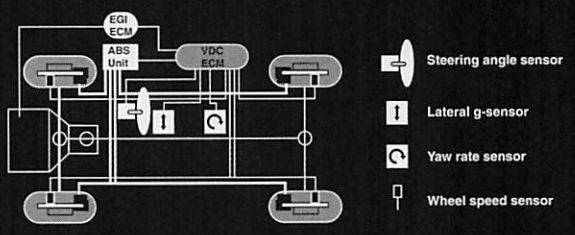
Go ahead—try to write down all your online passwords from memory. Chances are you can't do it unless you use the same secret word everywhere, which is definitely not a high-security strategy. **Darn! Passwords! [odarn.com/dpindex.shtml]** handles password maintenance for you, storing them all in one place and requiring you to remember only the password to the program itself. Use it to create randomly generated passwords for extra safety. *$14.95.* **DON WILLMOTT**

APOTHECARY: ©KEA PUBLISHING SERVICES/CORBIS; GRAVE: ALAN THORNTON/GETTYONE; RADIO: TAKESHI KANAZAKI/PHOTONICA

ENGINEERED TO BE ALMOST PSYCHIC.

Introducing a car so technologically advanced, it can sense trouble and begin to adjust for it before the driver even notices there's a problem. It's the 6-cylinder 212-horsepower Subaru Outback VDC.

The VDC stands for Vehicle Dynamics Control, a highly intelligent stability system that's designed to help prevent loss of control due to conditions like oversteer, understeer, wheel spin or vehicle drift. Ingeniously coupled with full-time Subaru All-Wheel Drive, it rivals systems found in vehicles costing thousands more.



The heart of VDC is a sophisticated series of sensors that continually monitor steering angle, wheel speed, brake pressure, yaw rate and lateral g-forces. The instant a difference is detected between the driver's intended direction of travel and the path the car is actually taking, VDC takes corrective action. Momentary brake pressure may be applied to individual wheels. The All-Wheel Drive system may redistribute the amount of power between the wheels. Even the engine's output may be momentarily reduced. Before the driver even realizes that loss of control is impending, any or all of these measures may be automatically applied to help restore directional stability. It's almost as if the car has a sixth sense.

In fact, in every sense the Outback VDC is a remarkable vehicle. With tactile luxuries like a leather-trimmed, 8-way power driver's seat. A mahogany and leather steering wheel by Momo®. And a state-of-the-art 200-watt* sound system built exclusively for Subaru by McIntosh®. Working together, McIntosh and Subaru engineers placed 11 speakers in 7 strategic locations so the audio quality would be specifically tuned to the car's unique acoustics.

The Outback VDC from Subaru. It is truly a phenomenon in the world of automotive engineering. And we have a feeling you're going to love it. To find out more, come visit us at **www.subaru.com**.

OUTBACK® VDC

The ABC's of Safety: Air bags. Buckle up. Children in back.
*At maximum output

SUBARU
The Beauty of All-Wheel Drive.

COMPARING THE TRIED-AND-TRUE WITH THE NET-AND-NEW BY DAVID SHEFF

FINDING BASEBALL TRIVIA

OLD WAY

1 A friend, claiming that "it takes more time to find stuff on the Net than on my bookshelf," inspired a challenge. Who could be the first to find out the year Carl Yastrzemski had his outrageous "Impossible Dream Season" with the Boston Red Sox? We bet dinner.

2 With my seven-year-old manning the stopwatch, we began. My friend charged directly to a book of baseball statistics. He speedily flipped pages and read until he announced that he had the answer: 1967.

TIME ELAPSED 2 minutes, 42 seconds

COMMENTS Of course, it helped that my friend, a sports fan, had the required book at hand.

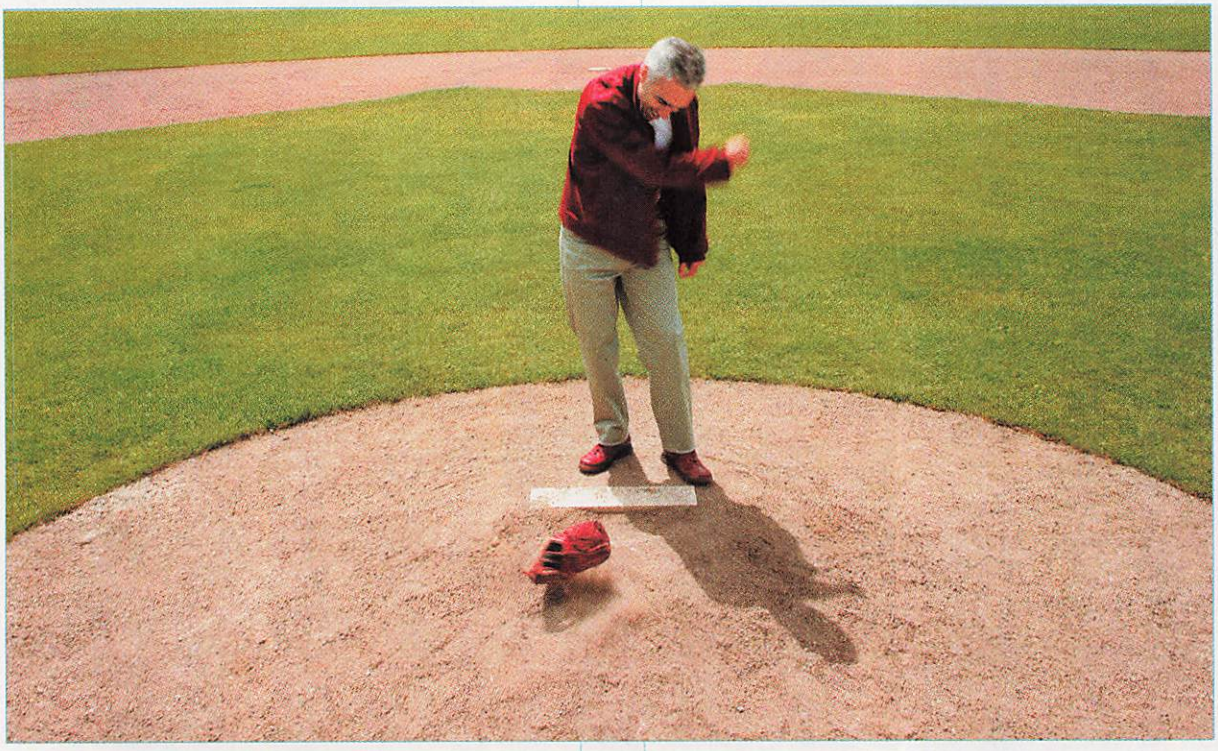
NET WAY

1 My friend's computer was already booted up and logged on. A search for *baseball stats* returned a long list of sites, including **The Baseball Archive [baseball1.com]**.

2 However, I decided to search instead for *Yastrzemski,* and I sped to **The Official Website of Carl Yastrzemski [yaz8.com]**. In Yaz's bio, it noted that the amazing season was in 1967. Same answer—but a bit faster.

TIME ELAPSED 2 minutes, 4 seconds

COMMENTS I chose an excellent Italian restaurant.



WINNER: NET WAY I searched the Net and managed to hit a home run.

EDEN ROBBINS; CLOTHING: KENNETHCOLE.COM

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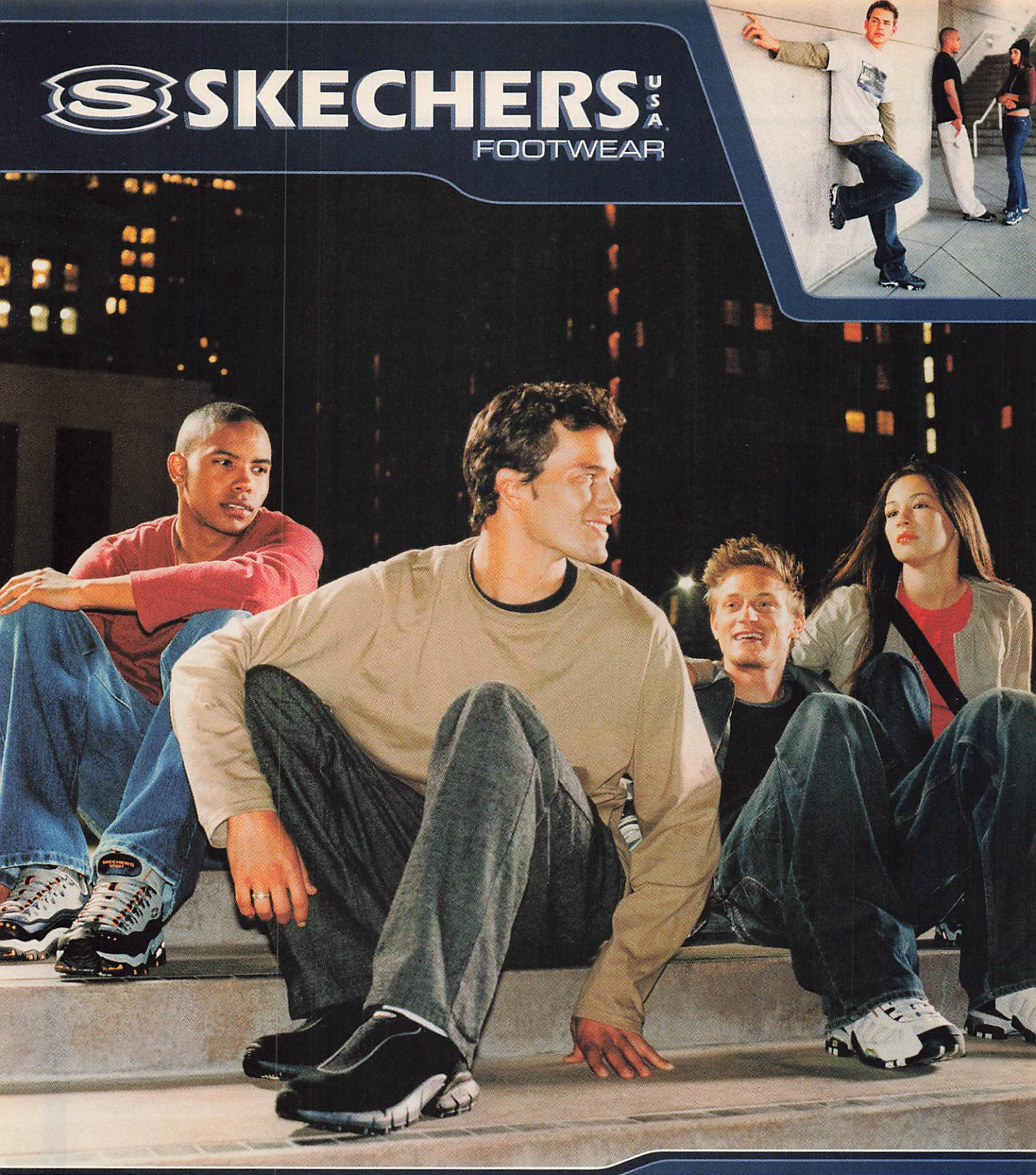
FOOTWEAR



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FOR A FREE CATALOG CALL: 1.800.201.4659

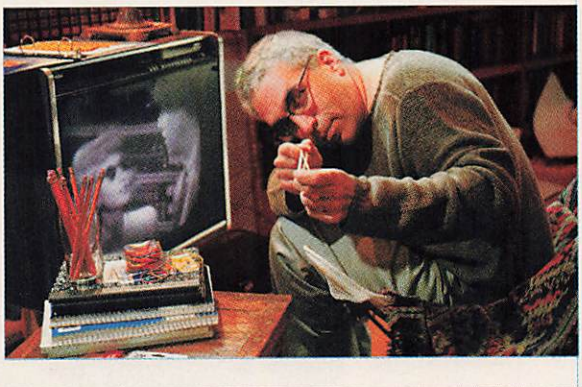
BUYING SCHOOL SUPPLIES

OLD WAY

1 Back to school means new notebooks, binders, pencils, erasers, and, this year, a protractor! (A letter from the school included a shopping list.) At a local drugstore, we loaded our basket. Total: $31.65. But no protractors. The grocery next door had one—for $2.

TIME ELAPSED 30 minutes

COMMENTS Elementary school is a breeze compared with what's to come, as I know from my college-age offspring.



NET WAY

1 Are there school supplies online? Are they any cheaper? I checked. **4SchoolSupplies.com** has a great feature: If your child's teacher puts a shopping list online, the site will fill it for you. However, my total order would have been $8 higher, plus a small shipping fee.

2 Another site, **SchoolKidz.com**, has a wonderful idea: "grade ready" boxes. If the selections match your kids' teachers' lists, it's a time- and money-saver.

TIME ELAPSED 20 minutes

COMMENTS If shopping at the local store weren't so simple, the Net might be a preferable alternative.

WINNER: OLD WAY **The Old Way is cheaper, and I enjoyed the ritual of selecting items with my son.**

GETTING A TRAVEL VISA IN A HURRY

OLD WAY

1 Needing a visa quickly for a trip to China, I called the Chinese consulate in San Francisco. When I finally got through, a recording explained the procedure for getting a visa by mail.

2 Headed to the local office. Passport, photos, and cash in hand, I filled out the required form and waited in line.

3 After dropping off the material, I returned to pick up the visa three days later. (The rush cost an extra $20.)

TIME ELAPSED Three hours of busy signals, 30 minutes in the office, and then three days of waiting

COMMENTS Once I got to the office, it went surprisingly smoothly. No complaints about that.

NET WAY

1 I needed another visa. **Consulate General of the People's Republic of China in San Francisco [www.chinaconsulatesf.org]** greeted me with the Chinese national anthem and offered downloadable forms.

2 If I'd had more than 30 days before my trip, I could have done the whole thing by mail, using the forms I downloaded. But I was again in a hurry. Went to the passport office in San Francisco with the forms and other required material. The procedure was the same as in the Old Way.

TIME ELAPSED Three minutes online, 30 minutes at the visa office, and the same three days for processing.

COMMENTS There were no busy signals, and the information was easier to navigate online.

WINNER: NET WAY **If you're able to plan your trip in advance, the Net Way is far more convenient.**

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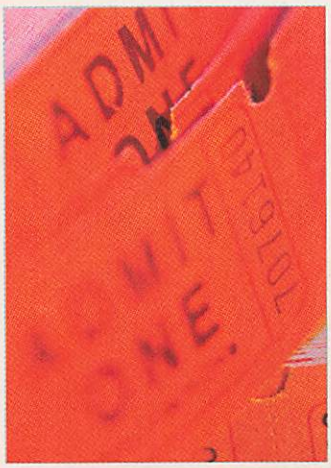
ADVICE FOR THE MALL-WEARY SURFER EDITED BY MEGAN GERRITY

The browser

NOT GETTING OUT ENOUGH? FIND THE RIGHT EVENT SERVICE ONLINE TO BRING YOU OUT OF THAT SHELL

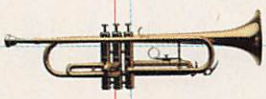


If there is an entertainment god, why is he so cruel? A certain someone wants to see *Mamma Mia*, of all things, for her birthday (no, not *more* Abba?!). Meanwhile, you're looking forward to the auto show, and the offspring are stocking up on juice boxes and Doritos for the 'N Sync concert tailgate.

Of course, you can score tickets for all of these events on the Web—ticket-buying sites have for several years been helping us avoid waiting in box-office lines and hanging on the telephone. But it helps to know which sites are best for your particular needs. Whether it's boy bands or Broadway tix you're looking for, our survey of some popular national ticket services can usher you to your seat. **AMANDA MYERS**

Tickets, Please

	TICKETMASTER.COM	TICKETS.COM	TICKETWEB (ticketweb.com)
IS...	The standard-bearer of ticket services for concerts, sporting events, plays, dance performances, and family fare.	A close second to Ticketmaster.com for entertainment, sports, and event packages such as the World Series and the U.S. Grand Prix.	Geared to the cultured individual, which means fewer sporting events and arena concerts, more jazz clubs and small-venue shows.
FOR EVENTS...	In the U.S., Canada, Mexico, the U.K./Ireland, and Australia.	Nationwide, plus Australia, Belgium, Canada, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, and the U.K.	In 43 states and D.C., plus Canada, Bermuda, Europe, and the Caribbean; links to South African and U.K.-based partner sites.
EXTRA $$$	Charges can add up to $15 per ticket. Free snail-mail shipping; UPS express delivery, up to $23 per order (for Saturday delivery).	Charges vary and depend on ticket price and venue. Shipping fee of $1 for snail mail; shipping to selected cities, $17.50 per order for FedEx 2nd-day service.	Service charges vary. No shipping charge for most events; free box-office pickup; no overnight mailing service.
NOTES	Search by state, event, or venue; includes seating charts, express ordering (stores billing info), and preordering.	Search by event, city, or venue; includes seating charts. If your event isn't listed, you're referred to another ticket service. Caveat: Tends to skip over events in smaller cities.	Offers an eclectic events list, though searches are by region or venue only—not always easy; the lack of seating plans and maps is frustrating. A wholly owned subsidiary of Ticketmaster.



Tools

Surfing for bargains offers an undeniable rush, but a Web page can't let you try on a suit to find out if it itches. If you "gotta be there," **SalesHound.com** can point you to local sales instead. Enter your ZIP code to ferret out price cuts at your nearby Brookstone and Eddie Bauer, among other stores. You can also print coupons from the site and register for free sale notifications.

I can buy what...?

Not all mobile homes have frilly curtains and window decals. To wit: Ralph Lauren's refurbished quartet of stylish Vintage Airstream RVs. The one-of-a-kind abodes recently hit the market for a cool $150,000 each. Proceeds are being donated to charity.

BINOCULARS: RYOICHI UTSUMI/PHOTONICA; POSTER: SPENCER PLATT/NEWSCOM; *MONA LISA*: DALLAS AND JOHN HEATON/CORBIS; AIRSTREAM: RALPH LAUREN MEDIA

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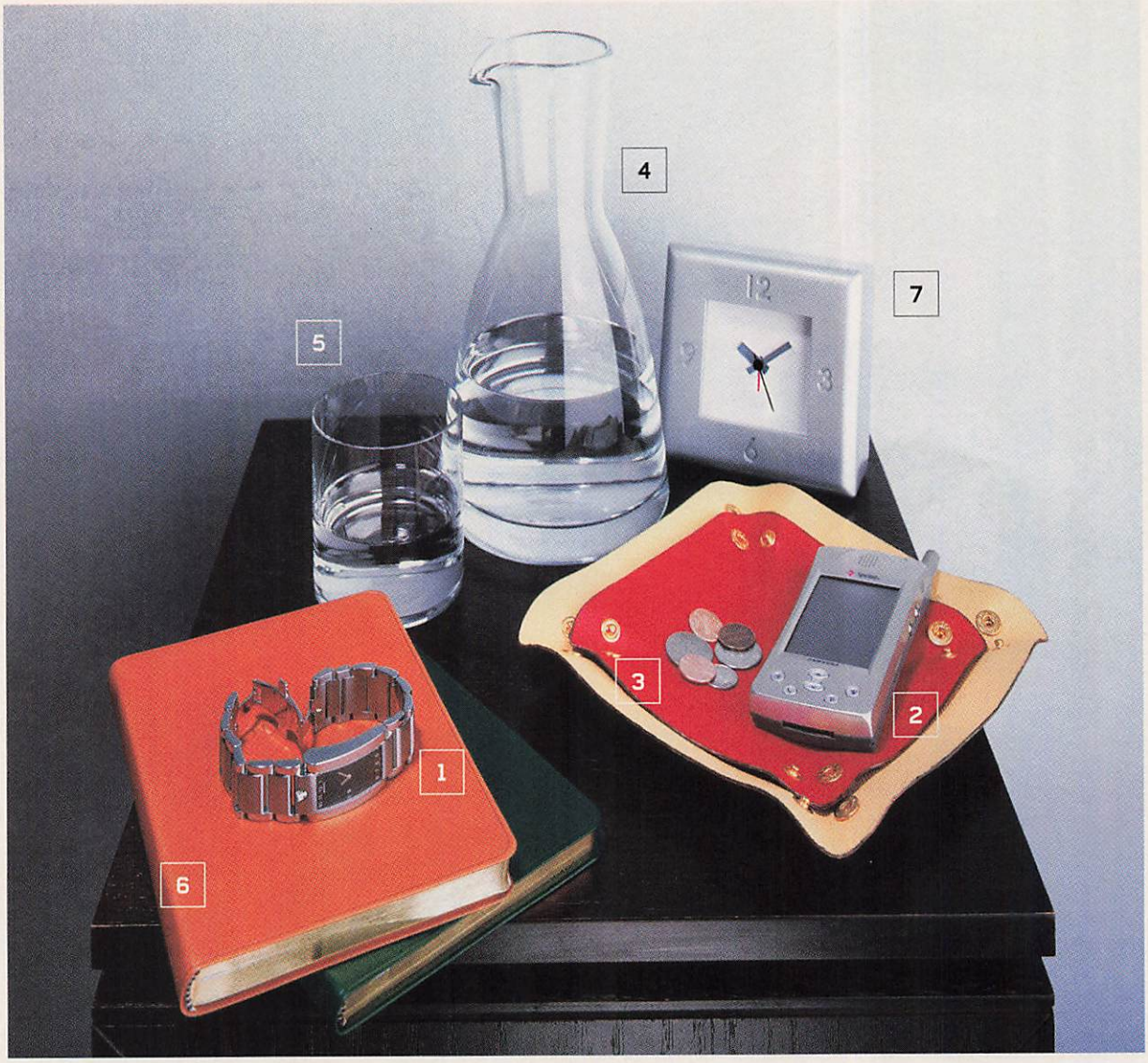
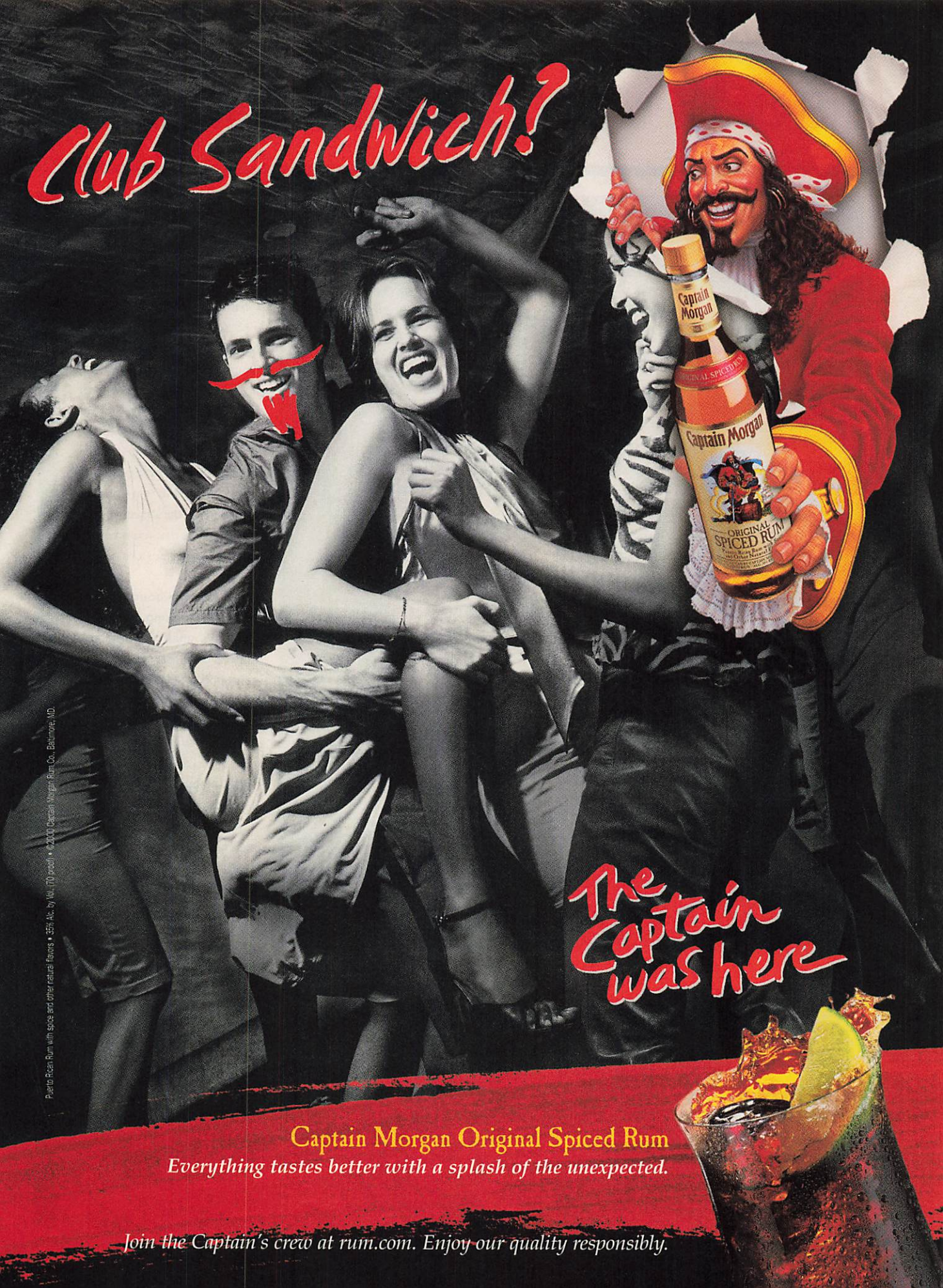


One Nightstand

Ever since the startups grew up, all-nighters have become a thing of the past—so it's finally time to decorate that barely used bedroom. Nothing looks as good unstrapped as a ❮1❯ MOVADO ELLIPTICA watch, $1,495 [movado.com], especially next to a ❮2❯ SAMSUNG SPH-I300 phone/digital assistant, $500 [samsungusa.com]—set to vibrate, of course. Empty those pockets into the ❮3❯ FAUX CROCODILE TRINKET TRAYS, $25–45 [vivre.com], and never lose another nickel. Before blowing the dust off that book, set out a ❮4❯ HAMPTON CARAFE, $20 [crateandbarrel.com], and a ❮5❯ CALVIN KLEIN HAMPSHIRE DOUBLE OLD-FASHIONED GLASS, $12.50 [macys.com]. Inspired? Jot witticisms in the ❮6❯ GRAPHIC IMAGE LEATHER JOURNAL, $42 [voyagerstravel.com]. Final tip: Preset the ❮7❯ MICHAEL GRAVES ALARM CLOCK, $20 [target.com]. Even eager authors doze eventually. **MEAGHAN O'NEILL**

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAY ZUKERKORN

STYLED BY VICKY McGARRY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Left: shirts from Hathaway [hathaway.com].

If the Shirt Fits

Q» I've always had trouble buying dress shirts off the shelf. I'm not tall, but my shoulders are very broad. What are the best resources online?

A» Having worked at a men's clothing store for many years, I'm all too familiar with your predicament and how frustrating it is. One of the best collections of dress and sport shirts on the Web is at **Hathaway [hathaway.com]**; the site boasts more than 100 hard-to-find sizes in several different styles. Even better, you won't have to re-mortgage the house when you get to the checkout. For a wide selection of designer shirts, including Ermenegildo Zegna, Charvet, and Ike Behar, contact a personal shopper at **Neiman Marcus [neimanmarcus.com]**. A courteous staff member will be happy to e-mail digital photos of shirts not posted on the site that are available in your size. True, you won't get someone stroking your ego in front of the dressing room mirror, but you can otherwise expect the same first-class service online that you get in the brick-and-mortar store.

Q» I recently bought a vintage silk smoking jacket online, but a small cigarette burn almost sent it up in smoke! I can't find anyone who knows how to fix it, so it seems only appropriate to go back to the Web. Any suggestions?

A» Surf straight to **Without a Trace [withoutatrace.com]**. While some dry cleaners might offer a quick fix, these experts can repair burn holes, as well as tears and moth holes, through a process called reweaving. By sewing threads from the same garment back into the problem area, these tailors can extend the life of your old favorites. Drop a note to **info@withoutatrace.com** to find out where to send your marred item; chances are, it will be cheaper to repair than to replace. Then rest assured that your online find will come back to you as good as new.

Warren Christopher has the answers. Write to askwarren@ziffdavis.com.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES WORRELL

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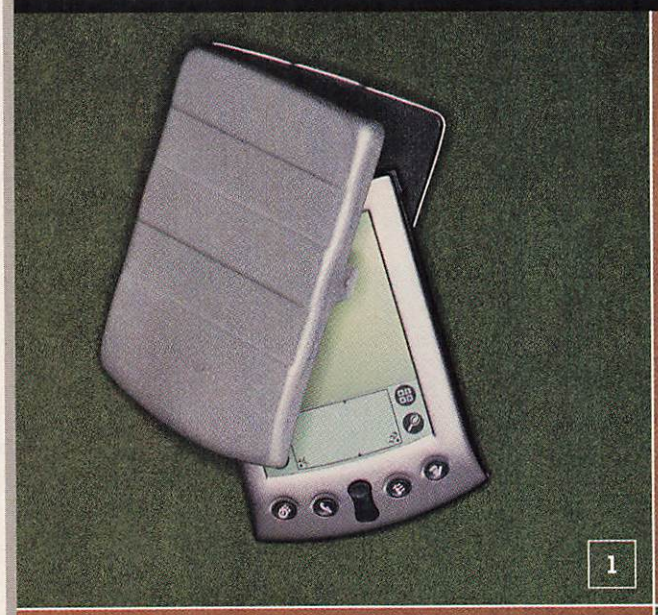
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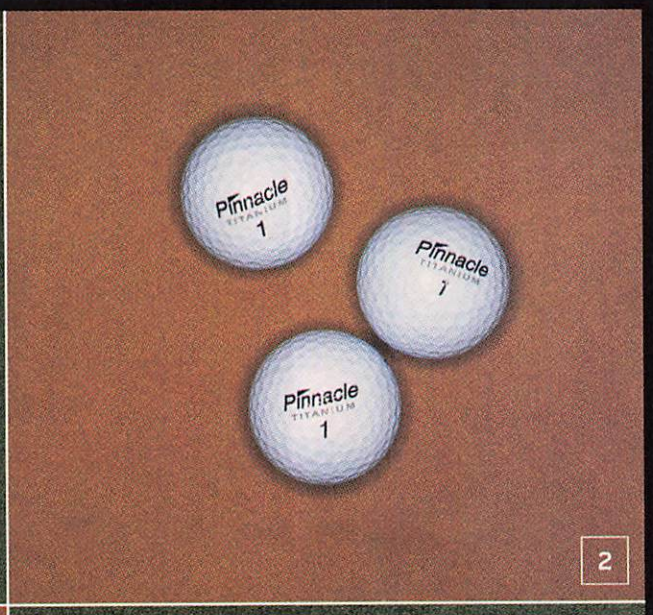

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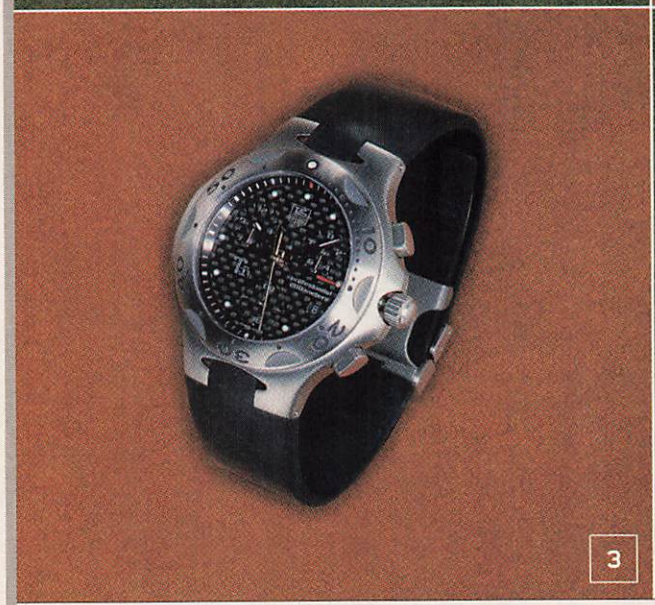
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4

Titanium Tempos

1 » SIMPLY INDESTRUCTIBLE
Bad things do happen to good gadgets. Avoid imminent disaster with a titanium shell. Palm Vx Handheld, $299, from **Palm [store.palm.com]**; case, $120, from **Rhino Skin [handheld-cases.com]**.

2 » FROM HERE TO ETERNITY
If, on the green, distance makes the heart grow fonder, then Pinnacle's aerodynamic Titanium Extreme golf balls are irresistible; $20 for 15, from **Fogdog Sports [fogdog.com]**.

3 » GUTEN TAG
Made of Grade 5 titanium, the Kirium Ti5 is "the very essence of sport": light, durable, and accurate to within 1/100 of a second; $2,500, from **TAG Heuer [tagheuer.com]**.

4 » TECH SPECS
Engineers use titanium because of its low weight and stability. We like the sleek look it gives these frames from Dolce & Gabbana, $400, and Movado, $310, both at **Eyeglasses.com**. **MEAGHAN O'NEILL**

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Content

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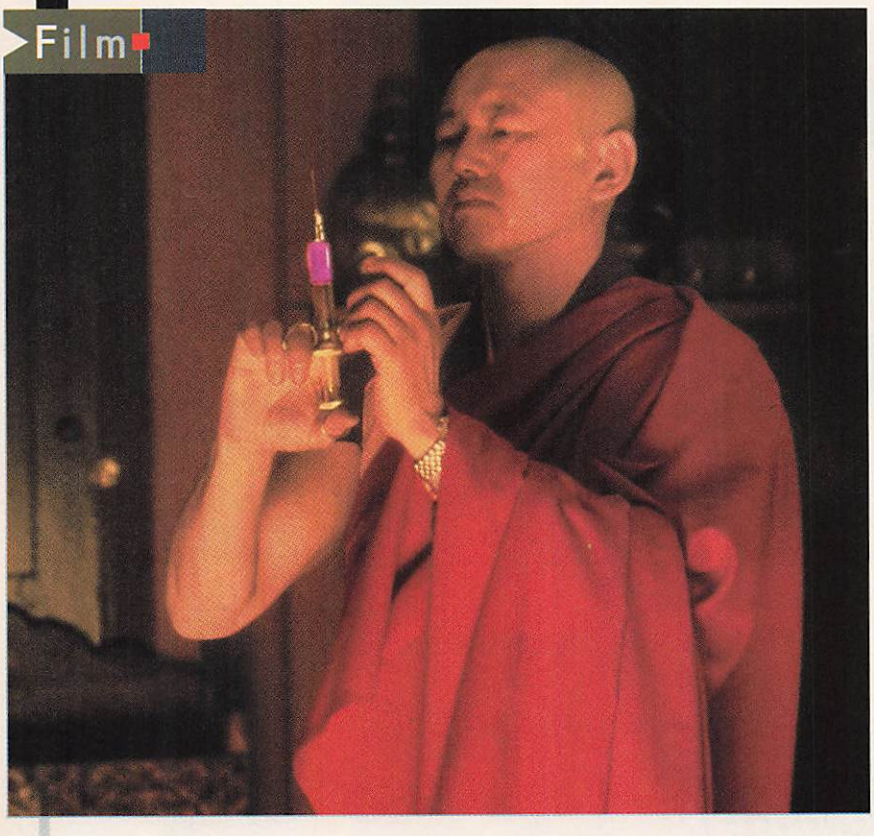
Film



AUTO AUTEURS

BMW brings together some unlikely directors

BY NOW, MANY HAVE HEARD OF BMWFILMS.COM'S *THE HIRE*, A SERIES OF SHORT FILMS DIRECTED by some of today's hottest moviemakers and featuring sleek, brand-new, always-in-focus BMW cars alongside star Clive Owen (*Croupier*). These canny product placements, directed by the likes of Ang Lee (*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*), John Frankenheimer (*The Manchurian Candidate*), and Wong Kar-Wai (*Chungking Express*), have created quite a stir—not only because of the big names attached but also because, as it turns out, they're pretty good. Frankenheimer's *Ambush* is a pulse-pounding car chase, not surprising from the guy who gave us *Ronin*; Wong Kar-Wai's *Follow* is an engaging little riff on Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo*; and Lee's *Chosen* (above) is a thriller about a young Buddhist monk on the run.

But here's another reason why these films are so interesting: BMW has been advertising them *everywhere*—in other online outlets, sure, but also on TV and in newspapers. It's a genuine Internet first: offline ads for online car commercials. Ouch. Our head hurts. **BILGE EBIRI**

CHECK IT OUT GO TO YIL.COM/CRITICS FOR MORE INFO

Film Shorts

BIG BUNNY A giant, man-eating rabbit lurks in the woods, luring kind, clueless little kids with stories about zombie birds and evil turnips. Presumably, he's hoping to eat the kids himself, since he offers them seats inside a giant hot-dog bun and exhorts them at the end of each episode to eat lots of fatty food. Both cute and caustic, this animated series out of UCLA has a *South Park*-ian dementia that will please even the most jaded of viewers. And is that a hint of Henry Kissinger we hear in Big Bunny's voice? **B.E.** ★★★½ **[nibblebox.com/public/index2.html]**

WE ARE ROBOTS Positing robots as contemporary Everymen (on a fraction of the budget of Steven Spielberg's *A.I.*), each episode in this slight comedy series profiles the travails of a different character, usually defined by a single characteristic. Angrybot rages against the world and flips us off, while the premiere show's Sad Robot mopes about nihilistically. Modestly conceived and fitfully amusing, the confessional-style episodes have agreeably simple animation, but the one-note humor can sometimes wear out its welcome. **A.F.** ★★½ **[www.wearerobots.com]**

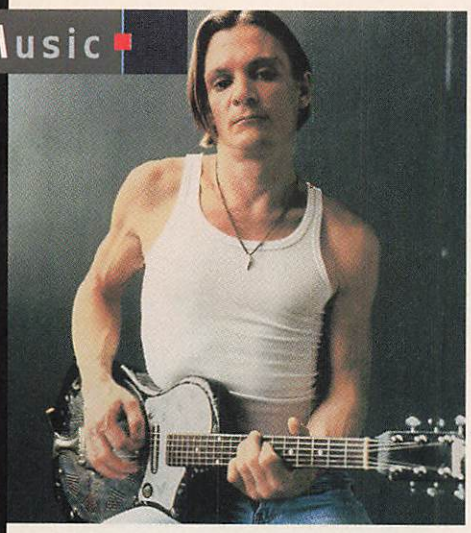
MON **NEXTBIGSTAR.COM:** TIMES VARY ED McMAHON'S SEARCHING ONLINE **[NEXTBIGSTAR.COM]**

TUE **BASEBALL WITH SPORTS REPORTERS:** NOON DOES YOUR TEAM HAVE A SHOT? **[USATODAY.COM/COMMUNITY/MB/INDEX.HTM]**

WED **USNEWS.COM LIVE CHAT:** 5 P.M. CURRENT NEWS TOPICS, SERVED UP HOT **[WWW.USNEWS.COM/USNEWS/CHAT.HTM]**

CHOSEN: ANG LEE; BIG BUNNY: AMY WINFREY

Music



VIRTUAL LONER

GetMusic wires a blues master

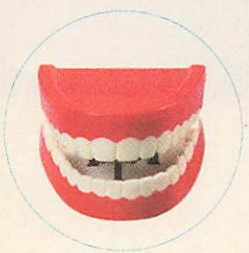
TODAY, NOTHING SEEMS MORE REVOLU-tionary than plain talk and lone-guitar artistry. For both, check out GetMusic's online talk show, The A-List, hosted by veteran journalist Anthony DeCurtis—in particular, the segment on Chris Whitley (left). The eclectic avant bluesman riffs on his intuitive style and his secret techno-pop roots. While DeCurtis has an encyclopedic knowledge of music, he also knows when to step back and allow Whitley to let us in on the creative process. Highlight: the guitar antihero's haunted swamp-side rereading of the Doors' "Crystal Ship," which segues into a majestic work-in-progress of Whitley's own. **[getmusic.com/shows/alist/chriswhitley] ADAM McGOVERN**

Books

CLICKING FOR YUKS

A quest for the Web's funniest people

THOUGH HENRY ALFORD'S *Out There: One Man's Search for the Funniest Person on the Internet* (AtRandom.com) is published both as an e-book ($9.95) and a paperback ($15), the advantage to reading this book online is obvious. It's filled with Internet sites, so you just might want to have your computer handy in order to check them out.



After a few mild laughs, the book comes into its own during an exchange of letters between the writer Richard Bausch and Sen. John Warner (R-Va.) that Alford found at **Harper's Magazine [harpers.org]**. Bausch complains to the senator about what he sees as the right's attack on President Clinton. But each of Warner's answers is the same form letter, which seems funnier and funnier the more irrelevant it is to Bausch's increasing rage.

Bausch doesn't win the crown of funniest person on the Internet, however, because Alford judges him to be a one-shot contestant. Nor does AOLiza, the famous psychotherapist-imitating program written by M.I.T. professor Joseph Weizenbaum, which a horny correspondent mistakes for someone in a chatroom he can put the cybermoves on.

I won't tell who (or what) does win, but I will say that too many of the contenders are, as the author puts it in another context, "more funny-weird than funny-ha-ha." Take the critic on Amazon.com who sees complex meaning in a collection of Bil Keane's *The Family Circus.*

Since it's a reflection of reality in every other respect, the Internet really ought to be pretty funny. But judging from *Out There,* there aren't a lot of laughs online. **[randomhouse.com/atrandom/categories/ebook] PAMELA H. N. HUNT**

Music Short

THE REALISTICS, "REAL PEOPLE ARE OVERRATED" The skeleton of '50s rock 'n' roll gets fleshed out with pounding guitars, swirling synthesizers, and a load of debt to punk legends such as the Clash on these four tracks from New York cult fave the Realistics. Memorable lyrics are a treat of their own, but the real highlight is a driving rhythm

section. Three additional tracks from the band's first release are also available at this site. **M.G.** ★★★ **[artists.mp3s.com/artists/14/the_realistics.html]**

Book Short

THE ANGELS OF RUSSIA

By Patricia le Roy

Say hello to the thinking person's spy thriller. Against the backdrop of glasnost and Mikhail Gorbachev's splintering Soviet Union, a fledgling romance between a Pushkin-loving Parisian and a Russian dissident morphs into a domino line of betrayals, forcing inhabitants of both East and West to adjust their illusions to accommodate the vagaries of the real world. Le Roy could use an editor to tame her flowery language, but she certainly knows how to craft a gripping plot. In 1998, this was the first online work to be submitted for nomination for Britain's prestigious Booker Prize. And it isn't just good for an e-book. It's good. **N.M.** ★★★½ **[onlineoriginals.com] ($8.45)**

THE CONTENT COMMITTEE: BILGE EBIRI, ALEX FUNG, MEGAN GERRITY, ADAM McGOVERN, NAN MOONEY

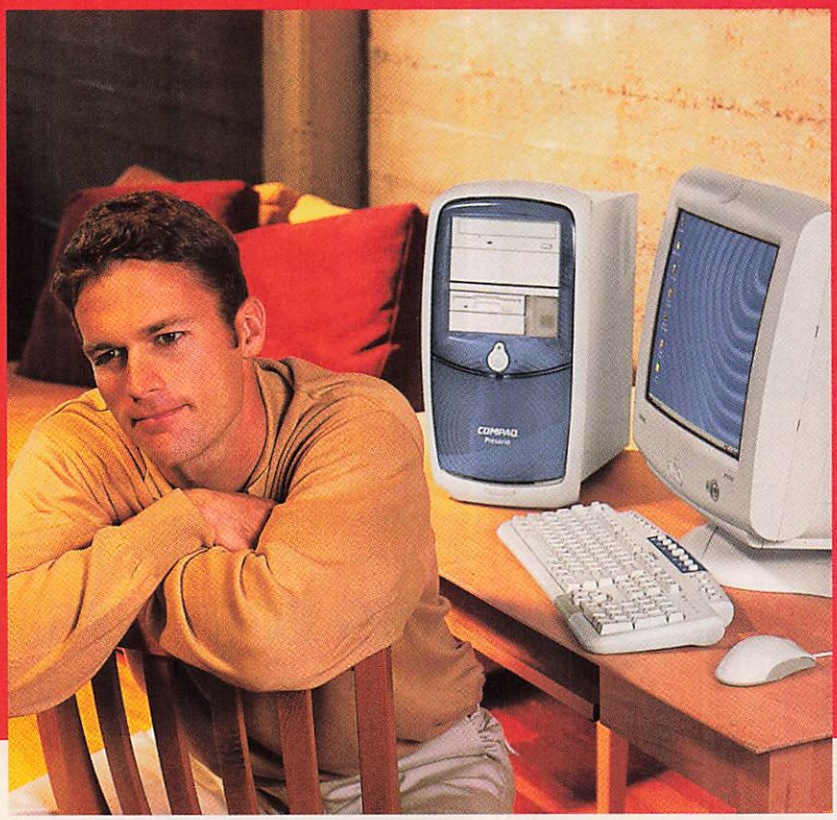
THU **BETA LOUNGE:** 11 P.M. GET ON THE TURNTABLES WITH ROTATING DJ'S **[BETALOUNGE.COM]**

FRI **SHOGUN: TOTAL WAR CHAT:** 9 P.M. STRATEGIES FOR STAYING ALIVE IN FEUDAL JAPAN **[COMPSTRATGAMES.ABOUT.COM]**

SAT **TOO RUDE TURNTABLE:** 6 P.M. SKA BEATS FROM THE WEST COAST **[GEOCITIES.COM/TOORUDETURNTABLE]**

WHITLEY: DENNIS KLEIMAN/RETNA LIMITED, USA; THE REALISTICS: ELENA OSIS

BUILT ON A RATHER SIMPLE, INNOVATIVE IDEA.



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SCOOT WITH STYLE

Now *that's* Italian. You may feel the uncontrollable urge to shout "Ciao, Marcello!" as you buzz around town on the **Vespa ET2**. Although it's a brand-new model (and the first to hit these shores in over a decade), its lines hark back to the original postwar design, giving it retro chic appeal. The 50cc engine maxes out at 45 mph, which means that in most states you won't need a motorcycle license. (The 150cc, $3,950 ET4 goes up to 60 mph and will require a license in several states.) Be sure to request a matching helmet, too. *Bella.* **$2,950 [vespausa.com]**

TOP TUNES FROM TONGA

With the **FW-i1000 Internet Radio,** Philips has created a broadband boom box that delivers more than 1,000 international stations (selected for their high-quality audio streams) searchable by genre, language, or region. Pick 40 presets for the latest from London or Lebanon, often with the artist's name and song title displayed on LED. The ear-blowing, 240-watt system includes dual tape decks, PC networking so you can access that MP3 library, and a three-disk changer that even plays CD-RWs. **$499 [www.philipsusa.com]**

TEEN TALK

The new **CybikoXtreme** is thinner and more contoured than last year's model, with a larger keyboard, faster processor, and more memory. It can send text messages up to 300 feet and is also a PDA, calculator, and dictionary. There's multiplayer gaming, too. **$150 [cybiko.com]**

cool tools

by don willmott

ZIP NO LONGER PEERLESS

Those 100-megabyte portable Zip disks are chump change now. Iomega's **Peerless system** packs 10 or 20 gigabytes of audio, video, or data files onto a disk that fits in your shirt pocket. Take the base station with you to Grandma's house, hook it up to her computer via USB, and show her your vacation videos. **10GB system, $360; 20GB system, $400; extra 10GB disk, $160; extra 20GB disk, $200 [iomega.com]**

ONE BUTTON TO THE WEB

Kodak has taken a shot at bringing Instamatic ease to first-time digital photographers with a dock that downloads the stored images automatically—and recharges the camera's batteries at the same time. The 2.2-megapixel DX3500 and DX3600 come with 8MB memory (enough to hold about 48 photos), a CompactFlash card, and a 3X digital zoom. **DX3500, $300; DX3600, $400; EasyShare dock, $80 [kodak.com]**

APPLE BLOSSOMS WHITE

The ruggedized **Apple iBook**—smaller, thinner, and an amazing two pounds lighter than its popular Day-Glo predecessor—is the back-to-school system to beat. This is portable computing at its best. Barely larger than a sheet of 8½-by-11-inch paper and just 1.3 inches thick, the 4.9-pound model is at least half an inch thinner than other models in its price class, yet doesn't skimp on power. It's built around a 500MHz G3 processor and has 64MB RAM; a 10-gigabyte hard drive (upgradable to 20GB); USB, FireWire, and AV ports; and four optical drive options, including a combo DVD/CD-RW unit. **$1,299–$1,799 [apple.com]**

webuser >

HOW TO GET THE MOST NET IN THE LEAST TIME — EDITED BY ROB BERNSTEIN

find it

KID-FRIENDLY SEARCH ENGINES KEEP YOUR CHILDREN OUT OF HARM'S WAY ONLINE

MARY ELMER DEWITT/NONSTOCK

It's inevitable: If children have free rein on the home computer, they will stumble across online pornography (accidentally, of course). With the Web's seediest sites only a click away via popular search engines and directories, proactive parents need tools to steer kids clear of online porn.

Searchopolis [searchopolis.com] uses a blacklist of sites to filter queries and offers a directory of handpicked links in such subjects as math, social studies, and language arts. Youngsters can also hit **Super Snooper [supersnooper.com]**, another tool that returns kid-friendly links.

Many portals offer filtering options, too. **AltaVista Family Filter [altavista.com/sites/search/ffset]** blocks search results related to drugs, gambling, hate speech, sexually explicit material, or violence—and it's easily activated from the top of the site's home page. The more advanced **Lycos SearchGuard [searchguard.lycos.com]** lets you control the medium that gets blocked (for example, Lycos chat). SearchGuard and Family Filter even allow parents to set up a password for enabling or disabling the filters.

Keep in mind that kid-friendly filters and directories are far from perfect. These tools are just a first line of defense, and they may allow some objectionable content to seep through. Filters may inadvertently block useful sites, too—such as pages on breast cancer awareness. For these reasons, you may want to consider installing **ChiBrow [childrenbrowser.com]**, a free Web browser designed especially for kids. Its Internet Explorer–style interface will get children used to surfing while restricting them to a database of approximately 320 useful sites (parents have the option of adding more). ChiBrow also offers access to monitored chatrooms and lets kids send e-cards to friends. **EMILY FRIEDLANDER**

quick tips

SEARCH ASSISTANT

If you take your Web sleuthing seriously, check out **Girafa [girafa.com]**. This useful Internet Explorer add-on opens a frame on the left-hand side of your browser to display thumbnail images of search results, allowing you to see whether a link is relevant before clicking on it. Girafa also offers quick access to 20 different search engines and can eliminate redundant results. The utility is free and works on systems running Windows 95, 98, NT, ME, or 2000.

CUT TO THE CHASE

Your browser has many secret keyboard shortcuts to speedy, easy surfing. For instance, in Microsoft Internet Explorer, hold down the Shift key as you click on a link to open the page in a new window. For more browser shortcuts, take a look at **Internet Explorer Shortcut Keys [cathyanne.com/hotkeys/msie.htm]**.

SIGNING OFF

Instantly generate a cool tag line (aka *.sig* file) for your e-mail missives at the **Figlet Server [www.surfplaza.com/figlet]**. Simply type your closing quip into the site's text field and hit Send to get started. It's good, clean geek fun. Looking for inspiration? Check out **Coolsig [coolsig.com]** and **Siglets.com** for thousands of *.sig* ideas.

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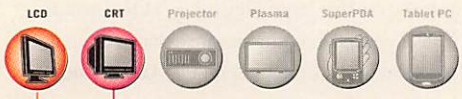

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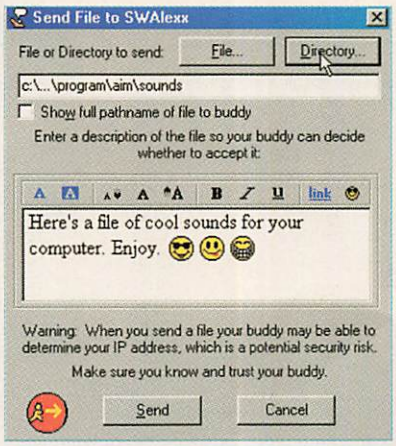
FUN WITH FILES: THE INS AND OUTS OF OPENING, COMPRESSING, AND SENDING TROUBLESOME ATTACHMENTS



OPENING THE X-FILES
Launch tricky or mysterious files with Irfanview (far left); send giant files using AOL Instant Messenger.

.01 open obstinate files

When you double-click a file, your computer will almost always launch it in a specific program. For instance, on most PCs, files that end in the three-letter extension *.doc* open in Microsoft Word. And files that end in *.mp3* probably open in a digital audio program, such as RealJukebox or Windows Media Player.

However, you may occasionally download a file from the Net or receive a file via e-mail that utterly confounds your computer and will not open at all. What's the problem? In all probability, your system does not have a registered program that can read or open the file. When this happens, turn to **Irfanview 32 [stud4.tuwien.ac.at/~e9227474/english.html]**, a free, all-in-one viewer that can open more than 50 different kinds of graphics, audio, and video files—even those with obscure three-letter extensions such as *.pcx* or *.iff*.

Another problem you may encounter when opening a file is its insistence on launching in a specific program. For example, when you open an HTML document, your PC may choose to launch Internet Explorer instead of Netscape Navigator, or vice versa. There are several ways to work around this problem, but perhaps the simplest fix is to install **PC Magazine's Freedom of Association [zdnet.com/downloads/stories/info/0,,77392,.html]**. This free PC-only program lets you change file associations at will and take control over domineering computer software.

.02 squeeze attachments

Other kinds of files that can bring your computing to a screeching halt are archived or compressed files. They usually end in *.zip* but may also end with *.tar, .gz, .tgz, .uue, .xxe, .hqx* (BinHex), *.mme, .mim, .cab,* or *.jar*. To open an archived file, you'll require a program capable of decompressing it, such as Aladdin Systems' free **StuffIt Expander [aladdinsys.com]** for the PC or Mac. And if you need a compression tool for, say, shrinking and e-mailing a large movie file to a friend, try using **FreeZip [members.ozemail.com.au/~nulifetv/freezip]**. The program requires Windows 95, 98, 2000, NT, or ME. Other popular archive utilities include **WinZip [winzip.com]** and **PKZip [pkware.com]**, which are free to try and cost $29 and $34, respectively, to buy.

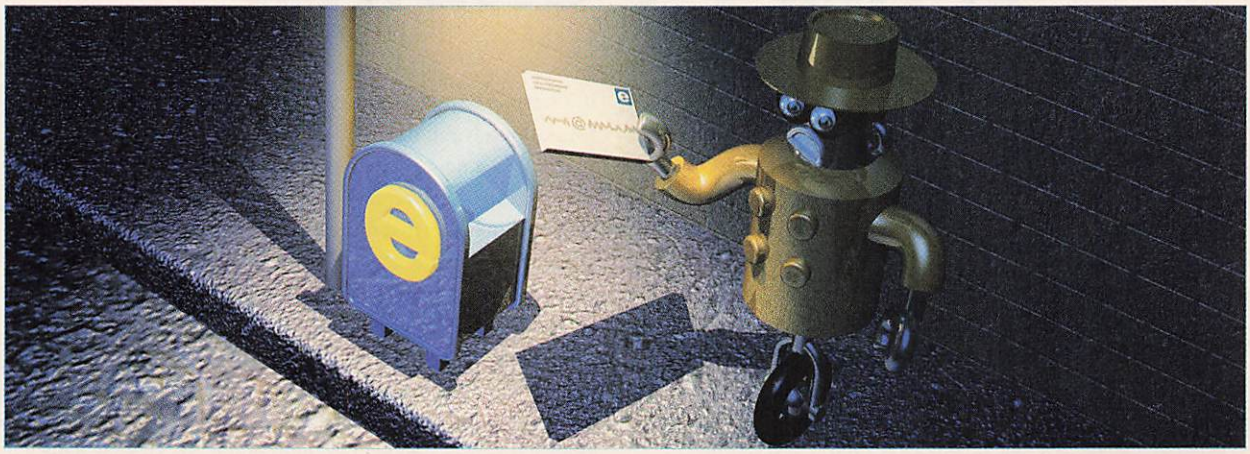
.03 slice and splice

Not everyone has a rewriteable CD drive, so what to do if you still use 1.44MB floppies? Download a dedicated program that will allow you to split a file into several pieces. One of the best free "file splitters" is Kazushi Oenoki's **File Shredder [kazusoft.pair.com/software/shredder]**; it works with systems running Windows 95, 98, or NT.

Another great way to transfer large files is via AOL Instant Messenger. Yes, AIM lets you exchange a lot more than idle chat. Simply open an IM window and click File/Send File. **LOU DOLINAR**

surf guru

MASK YOUR TRUE NAME IN E-MAIL; SAVE QUICKTIME MOVIES TO YOUR HARD DRIVE; KEEP TRACK OF MP3s



EDDIE BOWEN/WWW.COSMO7.COM

Q» I don't want my real name to appear in the "From" field in my outgoing e-mail messages. Is there a way to change it?

A» Have something to hide? It's pretty simple to change the name recipients see when they open your messages. In Microsoft Outlook Express, click the Tools menu and choose Accounts. This will launch the Internet Accounts window. Click the Mail tab, and then double-click the account you'd like to modify. In the User Information area, change your name. In Netscape Mail, click the Edit menu and choose Preferences. This will launch the Preferences window. In the Category frame, click Mail and Newsgroups and then Identity. In the "Your name" field, modify your information.

Q» QuickTime will not let me save movies to my hard disk. What gives?

A» Calm down—there's nothing wrong with your software. Apple Computer built this feature only into QuickTime Pro, the pay version of its popular software; it costs $30 for Windows and Mac users. That said, I do know of a sneaky workaround that will allow you to save movies to your hard drive at no cost. Open your free version of QuickTime Player and go to Edit/Preferences/QuickTime Preferences. This will launch a QuickTime Settings window. Check the box that reads "Save movies in disk cache." This will instruct QuickTime to save a version of every movie file you play in your disk cache, where you can fish it out. If you use Internet Explorer, cached files are usually saved in *C:/Windows/Temporary Internet Files*. Netscape Navigator users will have to poke around in *C:/Program Files/Netscape/Users*.

Q» I have trouble keeping track of the hundreds of tunes I've loaded onto my computer. What's the best way to organize it all?

A» I've instructed Napster and my sundry MP3-related software to place all music files downloaded from the Net or ripped from a CD into a single folder on my desktop. This way I have one-click access to tunes on my hard drive. If that sounds like too much work, then you might consider downloading **MusicMatch Jukebox 6.1 (musicmatch.com)**. Unlike most digital audio players, MusicMatch can scour your hard drive for MP3 files, whether they're sitting on your desktop, buried somewhere on your C: drive, or both. It can also sort these files by track name, album name, and more. Click to Options/Music Library/Search and Add Track(s) from All Drives to access this feature in MusicMatch 6.

aol watch

You don't have to log in or connect to the Net to access some of AOL's most important features. Right-click on the AOL icon in your system tray to launch a composition window, address book, filing cabinet, or calendar. You can also access these features by launching your AOL software and clicking the Mail or AOL Services menus. Of course, anyone using your computer can also access any of these features without knowing your screen name or password, so it's a good idea to password-protect sensitive e-mail messages stored in your filing cabinet. You can do this by signing on and clicking to Settings/Preferences/Passwords.

MORE GURU FOR DAILY TIPS AND ADVICE, SURF OVER TO YIL.COM/GURU

'WEB DAYS' WILL HAVE A HAPPY ENDING

Should this gala anniversary issue of *Yahoo! Internet Life* be the occasion for a Net obituary or a celebration? The Internet is in economic crisis, but its brilliance and audacity continue to amaze me. The stories of its decline are stories about money, not technology or communication. If millions of investors felt compelled to throw their cash insanely at Internet investments that made zero economic sense, is that an indictment of the Internet, or a demonstration that they were greedy herd animals?

I think it's time to stop reading about the Internet on the financial pages. If your interest is in using the Internet, not getting rich from it, the stock price of Cisco is insignificant. In my life, the Web and e-mail play crucial roles every single day. If I had to replace e-mail with the telephone and the fax machine, I would go mad. If I didn't have the research resources of the Web available to me, I would accomplish half as much work. If I couldn't order Saigon Sizzle Sauce at a moment's notice, I might have to move to Saigon.

And without the Internet Movie Database, I would have to return to the Dark Ages of movie press kits and publicity handouts as a source of information. I actually wonder if I could find the energy, the patience, or the will to do my job without the Web; I did it once, but how?

A lot of us were using e-mail, FTP sites, CompuServe, AOL, or whatever a long time before the Web came along. When we all crowded aboard the first browsers, there was an electrifying moment when we realized that this, at last, was the interface the Internet had been yearning for. It was way cool. I bookmarked New Site of the Day and actually visited it.

Some investors allowed their personal joy in the medium to cloud their financial judgment. "If this is such a gas," they thought, "it's sure to make me a lot of money." But there was no sound economic model under that thinking. The Internet and all its suppliers and content providers existed in a warp in economic space. Nobody owned it, nobody paid for it, nobody ran it, everybody visited it.

There is a new documentary titled *Startup.com* about the rise and fall of a Web company. I can think of another recent documentary that more accurately mirrors the first five years of the Web. That would be *Dark Days,* by Marc Singer, about the people who live in the railroad tunnels under Manhattan. Down there beneath the city, they build houses from plywood and cardboard, and supply them with running water and electricity tapped (that is, stolen) from the city's pipes and wires. Some of the houses surprise us; they have second stories, kitchens, TVs, household pets, shower stalls.

The Web essentially spent its first years living in tunnels under the economy. Web sites lived off the free transmission of their images. The pipes and wires they tapped were paid for by the government, people thought, when they thought about it at all.

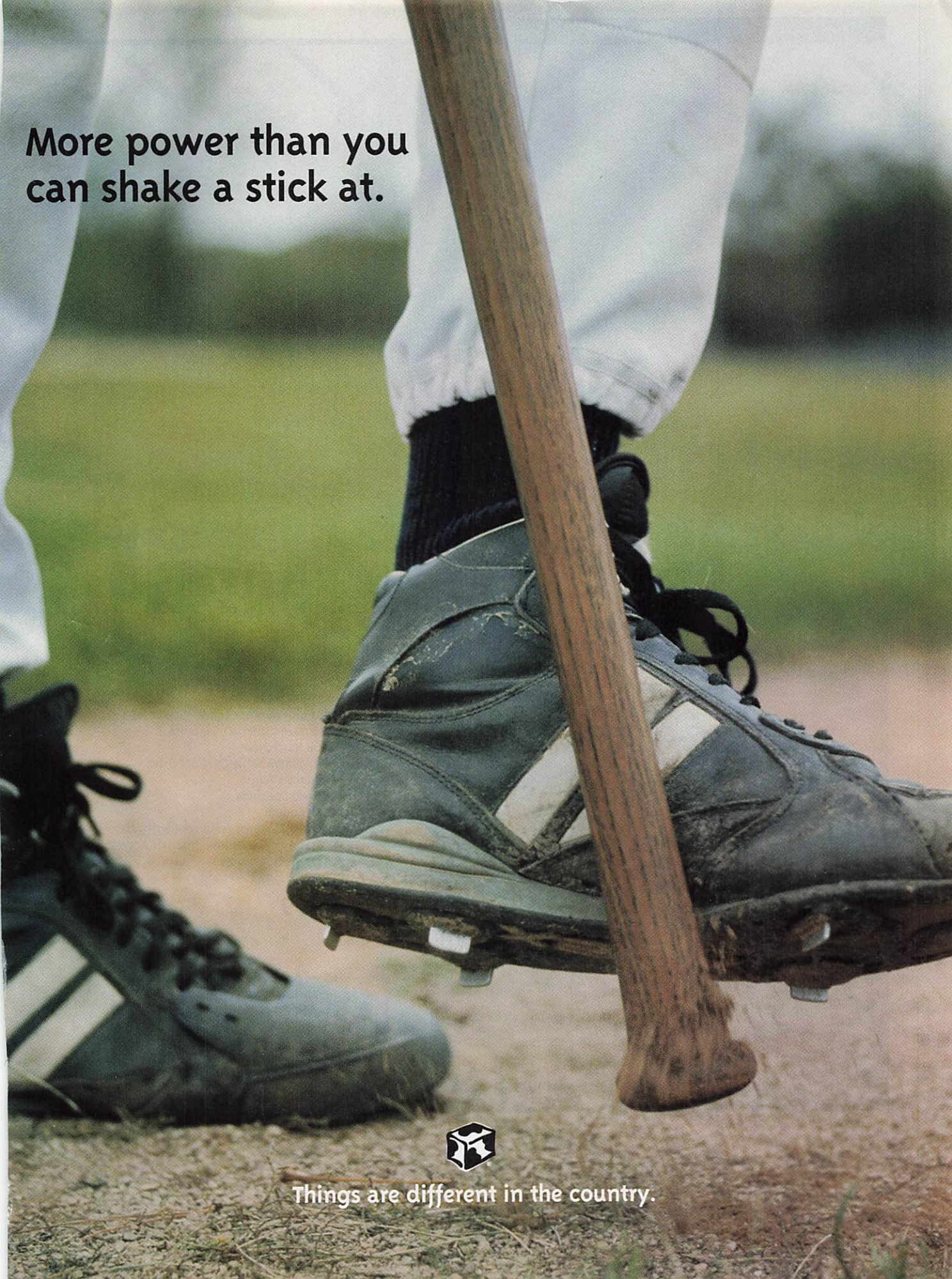
Now that no one wants to throw money at the Net anymore, the owner-operators of Web sites will have to earn or beg for money like anyone else

The difference between *Dark Days* and "Web Days" is that the heroes in Singer's documentary go up top to panhandle and search through Dumpsters for food, while the heroes of the Web found that people were shoveling truckloads of money down through the manholes. Talented workers even gave up jobs on the surface to work in the tunnels under the economy.

Dark Days has a happy ending. Most of the people in the tunnels are relocated into subsidized housing aboveground. "Web Days" will have one, too. Now that no one wants to throw money at the Internet anymore, the owner-operators of Web sites will have to come up top and earn or beg for money like anyone else. No more overnight millionaires.

The Internet Bubble has been compared to the Tulip Craze, when 17th-century investors bid the price of Dutch bulbs to insane heights. Both bubbles burst. The collapse of the Internet economy was inevitable, and clears the way for sane and reasonable rebuilding. Good news: There are more tulips in the world than ever before. ■

PAUL ELLEDGE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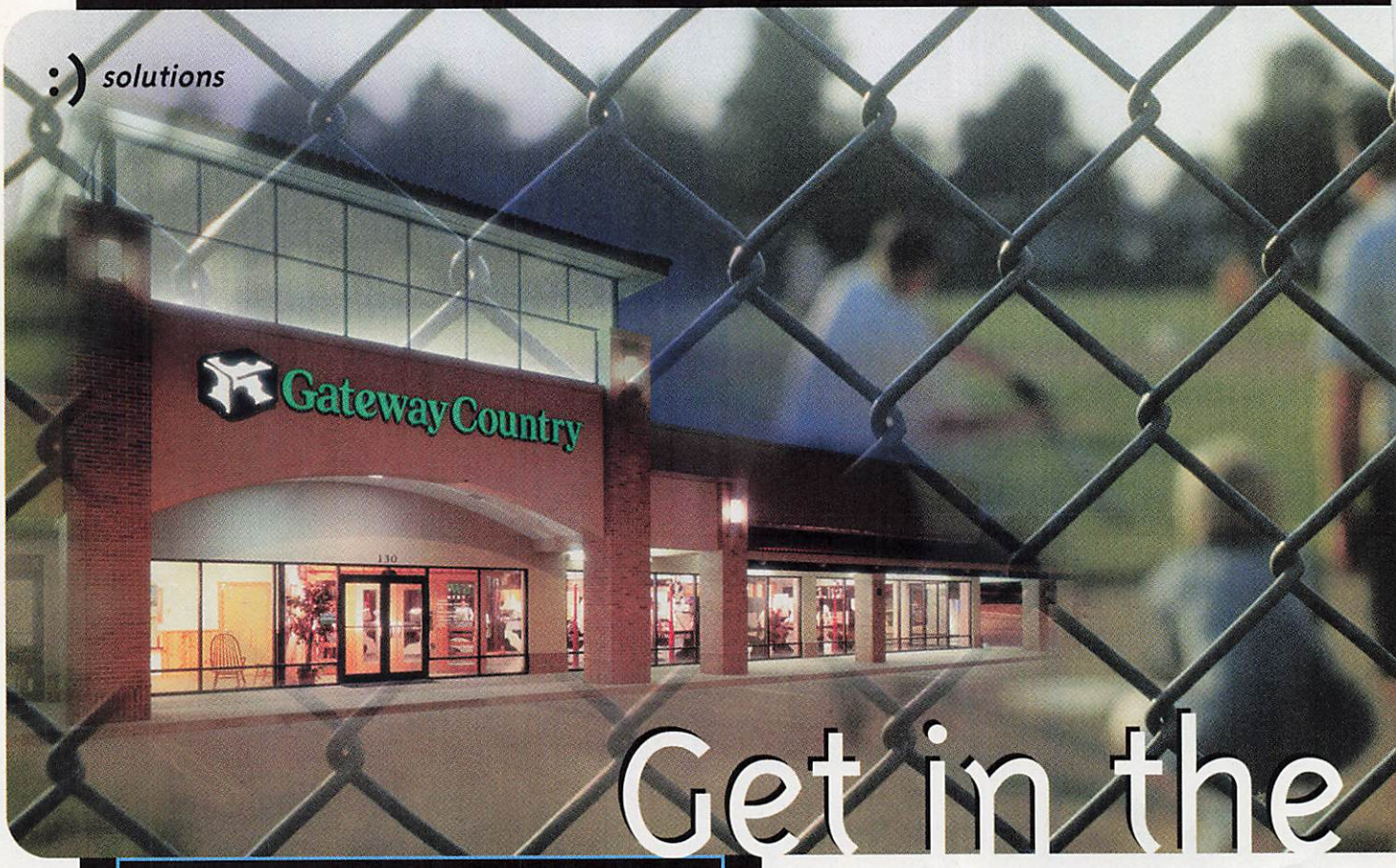

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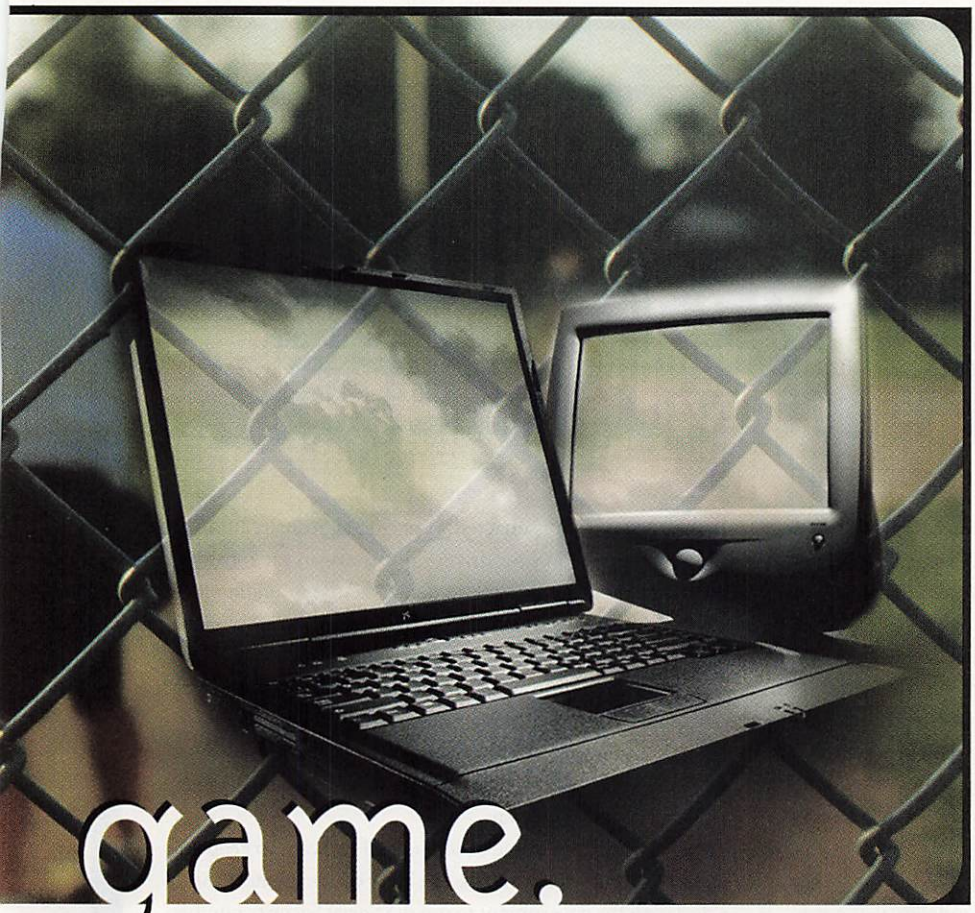

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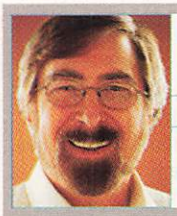

WHY WE NEED MORE SAFETY IN NUMBERS

Remember the last time some syrupy canned voice asked you for the last four digits of your Social Security number? Or the last time you entered the entire sequence into an online order form?

Providing your Social Security number to a business or a government agency is supposed to protect both parties by helping *them* to ascertain that it's really *you* initiating a transaction. But for as little as 25 bucks, anyone can buy your number on the Internet and pretend to be you.

Who would have thought that the lowly Social Security number, whose power lay largely dormant for more than half a century, could become such a scourge in the Internet Age? Originally, a number was issued to each individual as a way for the government to track what it owed retirees. Nowadays, at least online, your Social Security number is often the key to who you are. Thus, it has become both a vital tool for servicing your most discreet consumer needs—and a weapon that others can easily turn against you.

Identity theft is the leading growth crime in the U.S., and the successful theft of a person's identity almost always starts with a Social Security number

The issue may not seem important to those who haven't experienced the nightmare of seeing someone run up enormous bills in their name, and of watching their credit record become sullied for years. But identity theft is the leading growth crime in the U.S., upsetting the lives of a reported 700,000 people last year. And the successful theft of a person's identity almost always starts with some crook's getting hold of a Social Security number. That's not so difficult to do, given that your number is revealed on myriad government documents and on credit applications, and that the information is legally available online under the terms of the Fair Credit and Reporting Act.

This needs to change. And it *will* change if Rep. Clay Shaw (R-Fla.) and Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) and Judd Gregg (R-N.H.) get their way. The three legislators want to make sure the Social Security number is used only for its original purpose, and to ban its use as a de facto national ID card. If their legislation is enacted, your Social Security number wouldn't appear on your driver's license, or in the information that identifies your bank account. And the guy in the video store wouldn't be able to demand that you turn over the number as a general identifier, although the IRS would.

Despite its bipartisan sponsorship, however, the law will have a hell of a time getting passed. That's because the marketing community—which includes the nation's most powerful financial interests—finds it just too inconvenient to keep tabs on you any other way.

I say, "Tough." It's time to set limits if we want to keep our identities secure. The law must be clear that you entered into a deal with the government to use the Social Security number for a specific purpose, and that everyone else who wants to get in on the act must back off or face stiff criminal penalties.

What greater warning do we need than the words of the one guy who understands most thoroughly the menace of identity theft? Arguing in support of tough new legislation, John G. Huse Jr., the Social Security Administration's inspector general, has said that misuse of Social Security numbers has become a "national crisis." He has also noted that possession of a Social Security number confers the "power to engage in financial transactions, power to obtain personal information, power to create or commandeer identities," all of which "makes it a valuable asset and one that is subject to limitless abuse."

Online or off, I urge you never to turn over your Social Security number unless the transaction is connected with the number's original purpose. Anyone demanding that you cough it up as a condition of doing business ought to be prevented from doing business at all. Soon enough, merchants and agencies will be asking for our genetic profiles. For now, let's reclaim our own social security by keeping our numbers to ourselves. ■

Aseem Batra [aseembatra@hotmail.com] contributed to this column.

BLAKE LITTLE

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talk of the net

TRUE TALES AND PASSING SITES EDITED BY LARRY SMITH

VIEW FROM THE WEB

Still Bianca After All These Years

The recently announced hiatus of the early indie Web sites Suck and Feed.com got me thinking about **Bianca [bianca.com],** arguably the first Web-based community. Born Bianca's Smut Shack in 1994, it was started by a couple of friends who wanted to re-create the atmosphere of their Chicago home, a funky flophouse full of friends who buzzed in and out, doing all the things people do in a vibrant shared space. The site's motto? "Bianca loves you!"—whoever she is, whoever you are, and regardless of whether you've come to chat about tattoos or technology, medicine or politics or even (yes) sex.

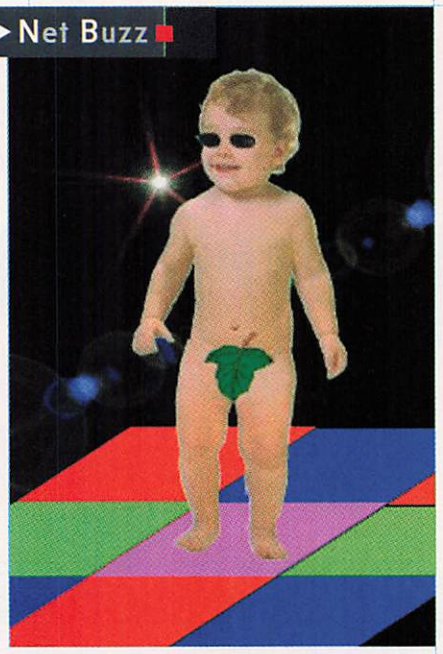
The downturn in online advertising has been a crusher for the site, which actually announced it would close before finding a money-saving tech tweak that kept it afloat. But Bianca has been a survivor through every step of the Net's evolution: the early obsession for obsession's sake, the dreams of a big payday, the brush with death, the buyout, the bailout. It also survived a lawsuit by RadioShack, which, uh, claimed to own the word *shack*.

At some point, founders Dave Thau and Chris Miller realized what now seems so obvious: Online and offline go hand in hand. So Bianca harvested the cozy vibe of its virtual world and manifested it in the physical one. Through parties across the country—full of grilled cheeses, big cushions, the occasional kissing booth—Bianca circled back to its offline roots.

Like Suck and Feed, Bianca may someday vanish into the ether. All three belong to a particular time and place in Web history. But the snarkiness of Suck has snaked its way into our larger media sphere, and Feed's ideas and sensibilities will surely disperse widely as founders Steven Johnson and Stefanie Syman tackle new projects. If and when Bianca's time comes, those she brought together can take comfort in the knowledge that she will never stop loving them.

"We'll see how it all goes," says Miller. "But things are looking up. Who knows? Maybe Bianca will become a religious evangelistic site. Bianca, after all, evolves you." **LARRY SMITH**

Net Buzz



BABY BELL Surfers are wild for this booty-shaking babe crooning Anita Ward's '70s hit "Ring My Bell" at **Ring A Ling A Ling [passthison.com/mybell/?exit=no].** Host site **PassThisOn.com** touts the most-shared URLs.

UP ALL NIGHT

The Gods Must Use E-mail

Gabriel Tonwuru preaches Jesus by day, Java by night. After spreading the Gospel on a sweltering Manhattan street corner recently, Tonwuru, a Nigerian travel agent and self-proclaimed preacher, moves indoors to tinker with an Excel spreadsheet at EasyEverything, a 24-hour Internet café in Times Square that seats 746. "I work for God, but I also have to work for myself," Tonwuru says, glancing around at the international crowd assembled in the 18,300-square-foot café—the largest Web-ready hangout in the world.

No one seems to notice Tonwuru, despite his breaking the unspoken code of librarylike hush. In just one of the café's 61 aisles, surfers invoke French, Russian, Spanish, and German as they dig into their keyboards, staring straight ahead into whatever it is they're looking for. "I'm usually here until 2 or 3 A.M. every night," he says, "but some of these people never seem to leave."

On this night, there are nearly 400 surfers still here at 11 P.M. "I'll keep coming back until Jesus calls me away," says Tonwuru. "Maybe he'll send me an e-mail." **JEREMY CAPLAN**

Trust us

wmob.com
www.liquid.se/pong.html
www.pianographique.com
chicks-dig-unix.net/prOn.php
gsa.ac.uk/colourful_island

COURTESY OF PASSTHISON.COM

AMERICA, ONLINE

All Squid, No Ink

When videographer Scott Beale finally made the pilgrimage to the **Burning Man [burningman.com]** festival in 1995, it blew his mind. Drifting among the campsites, machine wars, theme parties, and environmental art installations, he felt he'd found the home-away-from-home he had dreamed of ever since leaving Dayton for San Francisco.

"I thought, *What made this happen?*" says Beale, 33. "There's so much cool stuff there, it can't be only happening at Burning Man. It must going on all the time and people just don't know about it."

It was. And is. And six years later, the single best way to tap into the unbridled energy, fertile creativity, and utter ridiculousness of Burning Man all year round, as well as meet other subversives who keep San Francisco, well, San Francisco, is to visit Beale's **Laughing Squid [laughingsquid.org]** cluster of Web sites, and to receive the Squid List, a calendar of events he moderates and posts four to eight times a day, five days a week. Now a Frisco fixture, the Squid List is a hot line to the absurd, with 7,200 subscribers.

"It's like a contemporary version of a clique of French surrealists or writers who meet in a café, only we have a virtual meeting place," says Harrod Blank, who adds that the Squid List "turned out a crowd" for the Art Car Fest he coproduces. "Beale has really unified the counterculture."

Recently, the Squid has featured invitations to a few rounds of after-dark golf through the streets of San Francisco's North Beach; Change Your Mind Day, a free afternoon of meditation in a local park; and a three-hour bus tour, with unspecified stops for sketch comedy called **Popcorn Anti Theater [www.popcornantitheater.com]**.

Net Buzz

FULL BODY MAKEOVER Find your true avatar self at **[threadnaught.net/troopers/troopers.html]**.

Beale has used his pro bono Web sites to help artists win paying clients. He's also become an event producer himself, launching the Tentacle Sessions, a series of presentations by cryptozoologists, evangelists of fake religions, and sci-fi novelists. Next for Squid: regional links for those with a will to be weird in Houston, Minneapolis, or...Dayton. **BRAD WIENERS**

FIGHT OF THE MONTH
Sex on the Run

The Protagonist » Gary Kremen, founder of **Match.com** and rightful owner of **Sex.com.**

The Antagonist » Stephen Michael Cohen, who stole the Sex.com domain from Kremen in 1995 and was recently ordered by a federal court to give it back, plus $65 million in damages.

The Chase » Cohen has allegedly fled the country; Kremen is offering a $50,000 reward for information on him.

Whither Sex.com? » The site, now back under Kremen's control, is being converted to a lucrative porn portal. New president Daron Babin sighs, "I look at how much money this site is now taking in and how much time passed while it was stolen, and I know how much money Kremen lost, and it's sad."

The Sightings » Rumors in the adult-entertainment industry place Cohen in Tijuana, Mexico, where he reportedly lives large off money he transferred to offshore accounts. But so far, no Cohen.

Pulp Fiction? » Cohen's attorney recently sent a letter to Sex.com, claiming that two people were shot in Mexico while trying to apprehend Cohen for the $50,000 reward, and requesting that Kremen rescind the offer.

Says Babin » "This guy's just a downright crook. But eventually what goes around comes around." **JANELLE BROWN**

FOR A DAILY DOSE OF NET BUZZ, CHECK OUT YIL.COM/BUZZ

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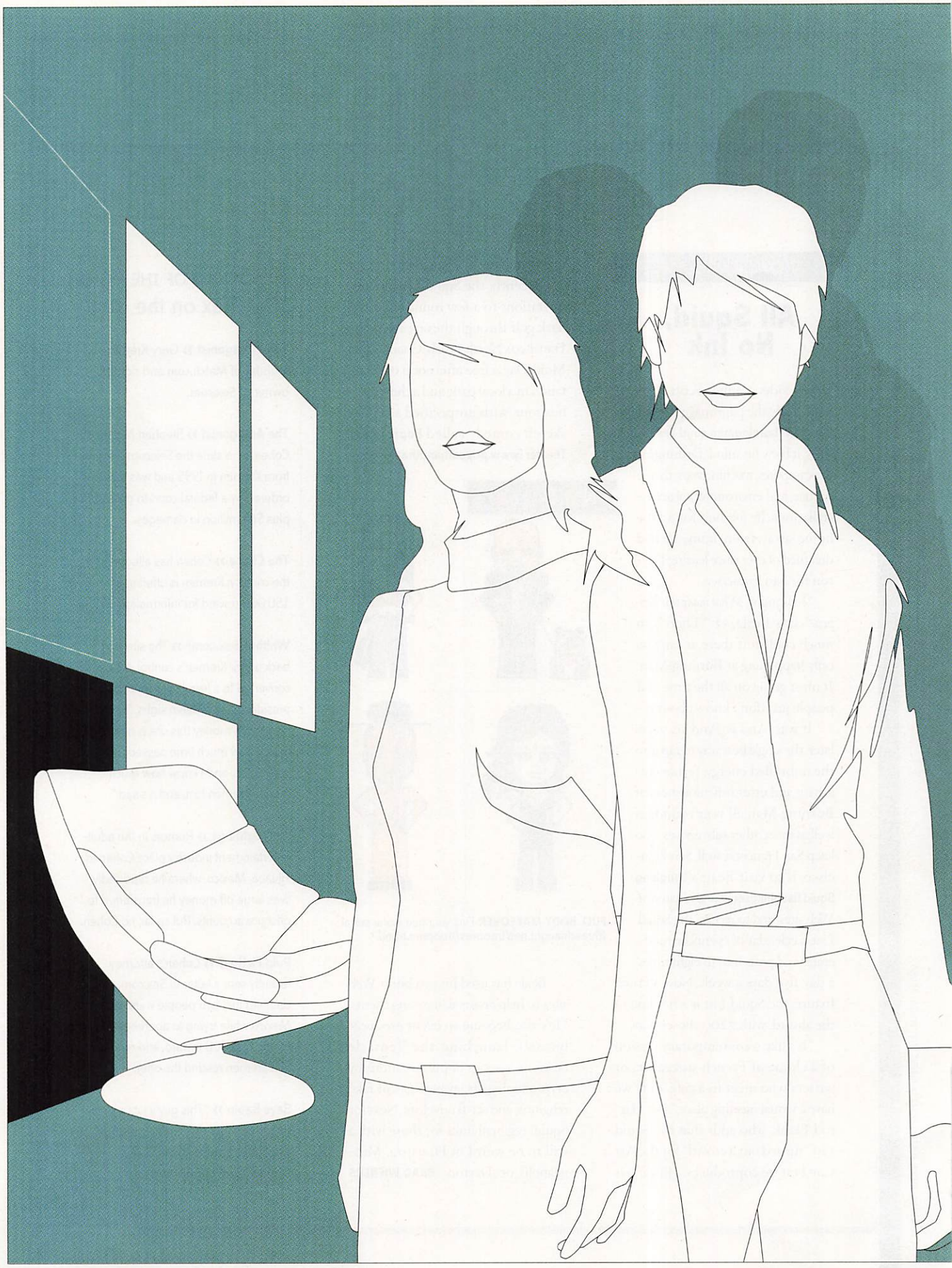


WHERE WE ARE NOW

Through boom and bust, what we've learned so far is that there is a human heart and soul at the center of the Internet

By Angela Gunn

Illustration by Ulla Puggaard

When this magazine launched five years ago, I was employee No. 3. At the time, the modern-day browser had just started to make its way into the mainstream. And almost overnight, the pundits and gurus would have us believe, surfing the Web—firing up Netscape Navigator or Internet Explorer and looking at a bunch of pages—became the most popular thing to do online.

Well, the pundits and gurus had it wrong. If that had been the real story, odds are you would have wandered off by now. Truth is, the most popular thing to do online five years ago remains the most popular thing to do online now. Simply said, the biggest online thing *ever* is e-mail—plain old joke-forwarding, boss-pestering, drop-a-note-to-a-friend e-mail. Even if you've never built a Web site, if you've never dipped your beak in the dot-com investment well, you are still absolutely at ground zero when it comes to what's most important on the Net, to what people really do there.

Surprised? No? Good. You're much smarter than a lot of people who claimed to know where we'd be by now and how we'd all be connected—*very* connected, and in ways mighty strange to our postmillennial eyes. No one doubted that the Net would be huge. It's just that no one expected you to be looking at it the way you do now, which is largely the way you did then, my Web-roving, e-mailing friend.

Five years ago, I sat in a lecture hall and listened to TV executives tell the assembled throng that we needed to talk about Net users as "viewers," not "surfers," because that's how things were going to be on the Net. Their logic was that those in the audience were geeks—people smart enough to build the technology that made the Net tick, but not smart enough to make it appealing. To do that, it had to be like TV, a proven crowd-pleaser in the nongeek world.

And what did the TV types think we wanted? Big "interactive" entertainments created by the usual movie and television suspects, with an assist from people who were already producing soap opera–style sites like the Spot. Everything was going to be paid for by subscriptions and ads and people buying stuff they had to own *right damn now* because they just saw it on *Friends*.

We surfers—sorry, *viewers*—were going to change, too. We were going to be avatars! We'd all have digital bodies and be in cyberspace, looking just like ourselves but...oh, you know, cyber. We were going to have information pushed straight to our desktops, no browsers needed. Heck, maybe even no computers. Straight to our retinas with the daily news. Computers were going to vanish, or turn into TVs, or live in our refrigerators. Certainly we weren't going to be reading this on anything as 20th-century as paper or a boxy beige computer monitor. And we were all going to be globalized day-trading zillionaires (but you know how *that* daydream ends).

So much for the visionaries. Fact is, our reality turned out to be both more ordinary and more extraordinary than predicted. Fact is, you're not an avatar reading this inside your refrigerator (nor, happily, am I). Fact is, almost all of us still use computers to get online, or use TVs that aren't too pleased to be pressed into computing service. Fact is, we tend to use our Net hookups to look up television listings and watch them on the same old TVs, leaving our computers to do what computers do better. Fact is, more of us are online and surfing the Web and e-mailing than ever before.

Humanity, not technology and not TV-style fabulousness, carried the day. As it turns out, the geeks were willing to rediscover their humanity a lot faster than were the entertainment moguls, who outsmarted themselves about what it is that people want from their time not spent sleeping and eating.

Part of what we want is something more than entertainment. Few among us are above a little mindless couch-potato time now and then, but we are hardly, as a book once claimed, "amusing ourselves to death." The true shape of the Net reminds us that there are places in our lives where mindless mass-market entertainment can't go: We like to talk amongst ourselves (where were e-mail and chat in the grand 1996 Net vision?). We like to share (was Napster even a feverish glimmer in the music industry's eye?). We like to mark a place for ourselves in the world (where, in all the cant about interactive shopping, was the nascent nation of online weblog diarists, pouring out their souls one hyperlinked paragraph at a time?).

The 2001-era Net is a product of real people getting online, not a variety of next-generation TV. Against all odds and a lot of venture-capitalist oddsmaking, the Net is still an individuals-thinking-for-themselves proposition. Ain't nobody gonna tell you where to surf. Ain't nobody gonna make you sit back and suck down "content" as if it were soda. We killed those models dead. Because the Net is surfed click by click, every single person surfing shapes the Net in her own image, simply by visiting things that interest and appeal to her. The soul of the Net is a human soul. And while the early adopters may wail that real people reduce their grand tech schemes to the unglamorous likes of e-mail, they should be grateful that they're not those TV executives; the Net, like common sense and folk wisdom and other basic good instincts, turned out to be beautifully cruel to the greedy, the arrogant, and the clue-deprived.

The early adopters may also wail (correctly) that the AOLs and Microsofts and Yahoo!s of the world turned their pleasant countryside ramble into a chicken match on a corporate highway. And we hear that wail, but remind them (and us) that the idea of an "interstate system" is to allow heavy traffic to travel from place to place. So let's give thanks to Yahoo! for paving the way; to Microsoft for a single (self-enriching) standard; to AOL for getting 30 million people online.

But as we ease on down a road increasingly owned by just a handful of media powers, let's remind ourselves that it's along the byways—full of homegrown passions, labors of love, and let's-share-my-obsession—that a more soulful Net still grows in ways that can't be measured or monetized. If we come to treat the Net merely as a utility—a better phone book, a fresher weather report—we lose sight of the fact that we wrested it from people who had other plans in mind.

I worry about forgetting that. But I worried about the TV people five years ago, and we beat *them* back. Let us watch and wait. Let us roam ever more freely. The frontier is still open. The Internet has not always responded to the proddings of visionaries or of the people who would use it to make money, but it *has* unfailingly evolved to serve us—our needs, our desires, our basic human goals. The Net has changed. We, thankfully, have not.

STATE OF THE NET

How has the Internet changed your life in the past five years—and what lies ahead? To answer those questions, we took the pulse of key consumer sectors, from finance to travel to health. We asked 10 people prominent in their field to describe the Net's impact on their own domain, from Chuck D's spin on digital music to Martha Stewart's take on e-shopping. We also looked at the numbers. Which sites are the most popular in 2001? You might be surprised.

→

10 Most Popular Sites text by Alan Cohen

Illustrations by Cybèle

STATE OF THE

NET COMMUNITY

Common—and uncommon—interests brought people from diverse backgrounds together

Back in 1996, many Internet users were just getting their feet wet, forming Usenet groups and using e-mail at the office. As they grew more comfortable with the medium, they joined online communities, such as **Yahoo! GeoCities [geocities.com]** and **Tripod [tripod.com]**, where members create personal home pages and find people with common interests. I remember teasing a former colleague when she subscribed to a newsgroup about painted turtles, but where else could she find advice on how to get her cat to stop stalking her new pet? Obscure hobbies also helped drive the enormously popular **eBay [ebay.com]**, the person-to-person auction site that's emerged as one of the Web's largest de facto communities (though it's not included in the Nielsen/Net Ratings below). It's not only lovers of the esoteric who've joined the party. The number of senior citizens who are online has grown from 8 percent in 1996 to 34 percent, as retirees find new ways to keep in touch with family, especially grandchildren. Web use among teenagers has increased an astounding 50 percentage points, to 76 percent, since 1996, and the generation gap is shrinking. A casual survey revealed that both groups hit the Net for their music fix—although my dad buys his CDs at Amazon.com, while my young cousin prefers to track down free tunes. As its reach widened, the Web began to look more like the face of America. Minority groups have increased their Internet presence from 11 percent in 1996 to 36 percent today. Six percent of stay-at-home moms were online five years ago; that number has grown to 36 percent. Many of them congregate at gender-based sites to sound off. According to Nielsen/Net Ratings, **Women.com** is among the most popular gathering spots. Overvalued Web companies have crashed to earth, but online communities keep expanding. **CHRISTY EPSTEIN**

25%

Estimated number of surfers who have used the Internet to seek spiritual and religious information: 19 million to 20 million

Percentage of surfers who made a friend online whom they never knew before in the offline world: 25

Percentage who entered a chatroom: 24

Percentage of ministers and rabbis who join faith discussion groups online: 33

10 Most Popular Community Sites

1 YAHOO! GEOCITIES [geocities.com]

True, a link from the Yahoo! home page doesn't exactly hurt one's popularity. But even before Yahoo! acquired GeoCities in 1999, the site was a top destination for folks looking to create a home page. Now fun features such as Yahoo! Presence, which lets visitors see when you are online so they can send you an instant message, provide even more incentive to sign up.

2 TRIPOD [tripod.com]

Lycos-owned Tripod has long scored with users looking to build their own sites. Why? Beginners and experts are equally welcome. Advanced coders can write and store their own scripts. Novices like the site-building templates. The result: a whole lot of settlers.

3 ABOUT [about.com]

Why bother with a search engine when someone has already done the work for you? About's 750 human guides tell you what sites are worth checking out in more than 50,000 subjects. Users know they can find a quick set of annotated links, whether they're interested in digital photography or basket weaving.

4 AOL HOMETOWN [hometown.aol.com]

Hometown is not a members-only club; anyone with Internet access can build Web pages

SOURCES OF STATISTICS: 1) PEW INTERNET & AMERICAN LIFE PROJECT (STUDY OF ADULT NET SURFERS), DECEMBER 2000; 2) IBID., AUGUST 2000; 3) IBID., JUNE 2001; 4) IBID., DECEMBER 2000

here. With its hundred-plus templates and wealth of links to design tutorials, it does a particularly good job attracting and retaining beginners—which is not surprising, given it's an AOL property.

5 DIGITALCITY.COM
[digitalcity.com]

This site is shrewd enough to realize that people outside Los Angeles and New York have lives, too, so it serves up entertainment listings, restaurant picks, and shopping ideas for more than 60 markets nationwide. Being owned by AOL enhances the site's visibility.

6 HOMESTEAD
[homestead.com]

We've long touted Homestead's elegant drag-and-drop interface and ever-growing array of Web page elements, including chatrooms and streaming video. With its new Homestead Professional e-commerce platform, the site is attempting to raise its profile. It also hopes to raise revenue by starting to charge a fee for personal pages. Will settlers be willing to pay? If the answer is yes, expect other Web communities to follow suit.

7 CLASSMATES
[classmates.com]

We're not so sure we like the idea of finding old high-school classmates. But if you *are* curious, we can certainly see why you'd come here: With more than 40,000 schools and 20 million names on file, there's probably no quicker way to find an old buddy (or bully, if you're thinking revenge).

8 MSN: COMMUNITIES
[communities.msn.com]

It's hard to miss MSN Communities: There's a link from practically every Microsoft-branded site. What brings people back is the vast variety of groups you can join. And if you can imagine something no one else has (sorry—an homage to the Valbuena Chimps is here already), you can create your own community.

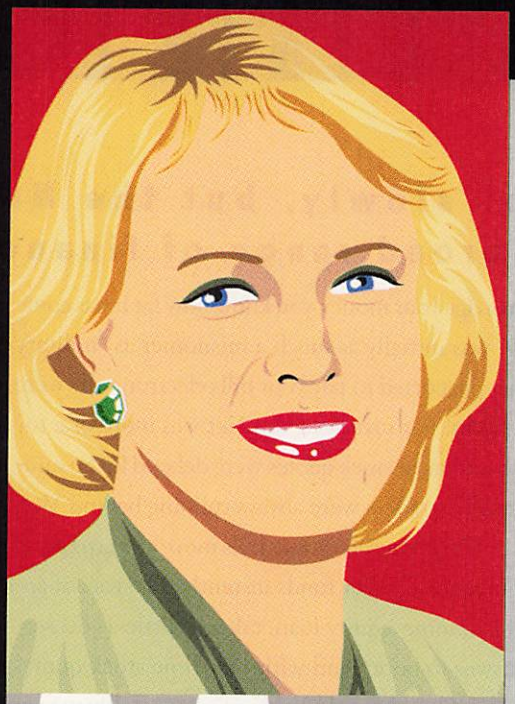
9 NETSCAPE: WEB SITES
[netscape.com/websites]

Netscape's community features appeal to those looking to promote a business. Aspiring entrepreneurs can create their own Netbusiness card, which puts their contact information in a searchable, Web-based Rolodex.

10 WOMEN.COM
[women.com]

The site gets a boost from its exposure on AOL's Women Channel, but an even bigger boost may be yet to come: It was recently acquired by chief rival iVillage. Once the female-centric giants combine their two audiences, Women.com may move up this chart.

RANKINGS ARE BASED ON AUDIENCE DATA PROVIDED BY NIELSEN/NETRATINGS FOR OCTOBER 2000 THROUGH MARCH 2001, AND DO NOT INCLUDE TRAFFIC TO PROPRIETARY CHANNELS OF YAHOO! OR AOL.



Meg Whitman

The president and CEO of eBay, the world's largest online trading community, explains why it takes a village to grow a metropolis

"In the community where you live, you end up being friends with people who like the same things you do—fly-fishing or art or whatever. The Net ties people together along a common area of interest, but without regard to geography or time. The fact that eBay was a whole new thing captivated people. It was like, 'You couldn't do this before—this is really cool!' That's why a community grew up around it. When there's something new in town, people talk about it, and they talk about it for a long time.

However, community for community's sake is a difficult business model. The reason eBay has worked is that it is anchored in buying and selling or, as we say at eBay, trading. People had a reason to be at the site, and then discovered folks of a like-minded interest. The core of that community is the Feedback Profile, which was a deliberate move to ensure a feeling of trust and a sense of identity for users. People get an enormous kick out of the profiles. I love to see what people say about me.

I've been asked, "Don't you hate that people criticize eBay on the message boards?" I don't hate it at all. It's our best form of customer research. Two years ago, Auction Watch began having pretty vibrant discussions about eBay on their site. I said to our team, "Get 'em back here and make sure we have as robust a forum for people to complain about eBay on eBay."

The challenge for us is how to grow big and stay small. We're like a village growing into a city, and within that city are districts—the diamond district, garment district, flower district. How do we keep people feeling connected, especially in the practical categories? I don't need to come back to buy a pair of skis every single week. But if I'm buying a pair of used skis for my 13-year-old, I may end up in a dialogue with the seller about where our families have skied. It's a nice little oasis in an otherwise crazy world."

STATE OF THE NET

FINANCE

It started out slowly, but the Net got up to speed with a broad range of financial services

If you've used the Internet to manage your money, you know how far it has come in five years. "Online banking" was initially as much a misnomer as "military intelligence," because banks that purported to pay your bills electronically were often just mailing out paper checks. For investors, the Net was more of a toy than a tool: Research was sparse, and most stock quotes were delayed by 20 minutes or more—meaning that small e-traders were always running behind Wall Street insiders. These days, online financial transactions move at warp speed. The major banks enable customers to transfer funds instantly. The task of applying for a credit card, or even a home-equity loan, takes as little as 60 seconds—with an on-the-spot answer to boot. And with real-time stock quotes readily available across the Net, the little guys can act on the same market intelligence as the pros. At the same time, obstacles imposed by legislators at the behest of brick-and-mortar lobbies have limited the Net's ability to reduce transaction costs. Consumers may never fully reap the huge potential savings from buying insurance policies over the Internet, for instance, because federal regulations now require insurers to offer coverage for a uniform price. Similarly, state franchise laws have frustrated the efforts of e-tailers such as **CarsDirect.com** to sell directly to consumers. The good news is that personal finance sites can now help consumers see their entire fiscal picture. Account aggregation services consolidate credit card bills with bank, brokerage, and mutual fund statements. And a new breed of companies, among them **Financial Engines [financialengines.com]** and **Morningstar ClearFuture [cf.morningstar.com]**, have developed sophisticated digital tools that offer specific advice on how to invest your assets to meet life goals. Still, artificial intelligence goes only so far. With millions of pages of new content being added to the Net each year, many investors may conclude that they need a real-life financial adviser to play the role of human portal. **DEAN FOUST**

10 Most Popular Finance Sites

1 MSN: MONEYCENTRAL
[moneycentral.msn.com]

If you want to win elected office, it never hurts being a Kennedy. If you want to be one of the Web's most popular destinations, it never hurts being a Microsoft site. But what keeps users coming back are MoneyCentral's many tools—notably, a portfolio manager that lets you import account information from online brokerages, and enough financial calculators to keep Alan Greenspan entertained for hours.

2 CBS MARKETWATCH
[marketwatch.com]

Maybe you won't get Walter Cronkite reading stock quotes, but that CBS name does reassure. And with MarketWatch reports on CBS radio and television affiliates, the site gets plenty of exposure offline, too.

3 NEXTCARD
[nextcard.com]

Other companies let you apply online for a credit card, but NextCard offers extra incentives, such

24/7

Percentage of surfers who bank online: 18

Percentage who say the Internet improves their management of personal finances: 26

Number of people who used TurboTax software to file their taxes online in 2000: 2.4 million

In 1996: 10,000

as customized cards. NextCard was also the initial firm to offer instant online credit card approval, giving it that crucial first-mover advantage.

4 CAPITAL ONE
[capitalone.com]

As one of the world's largest providers of MasterCard and Visa credit cards, you'd expect Capital One to draw heavy traffic just from folks looking to pay their bills. But there are other reasons to visit: "cybertized" services, such as being able to view recent account activity online.

5 QUICKEN.COM
[quicken.com]

There's no shortage of sites where you can check your portfolio, read market news, get tax tips, and shop for a loan. But how many also integrate with Quicken, the world's best-selling personal finance software?

6 AMERICANEXPRESS.COM
[americanexpress.com]

It's a household name, but we were a bit startled to see American Express rank so high. In fact, the site does a nice job of attracting visitors, with dozens of (often significant) discounts when you shop online with your AmEx card.

7 THE MOTLEY FOOL
[fool.com]

The Motley Fool seems to think that finances are a laughing matter. Why do so many people put up with this abuse? Perhaps it's because behind the sarcasm is a wealth of investment advice.

8 E*TRADE
[etrade.com]

Back in the good ol' bull-market days, we would have expected our favorite online brokerage to rank higher on the list. Even in lean times, however, the site still scores. Features such as off-hours trading keep investors coming back; offering the first 25 trades free attracts new customers. Perhaps just not as many as before.

9 WELLS FARGO
[wellsfargo.com]

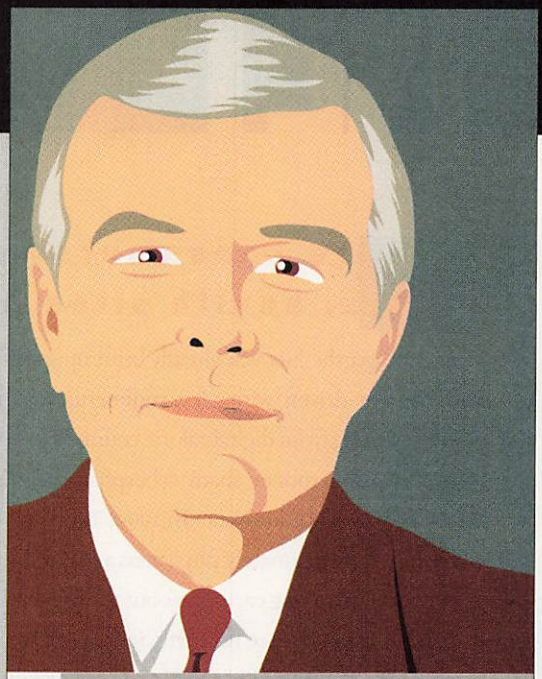
True, Wells Fargo has the only Top 10 site where you can learn the history of stagecoaches. But we don't think that's what draws the traffic, although it's what drew us. Wells was the first major U.S. company to launch online banking (back in 1995), and still offers it free of charge.

10 INTUIT
[intuit.com]

Given that Intuit is the company behind Quicken software (as well as other popular packages such as QuickBooks and TurboTax), it's hardly shocking to find its own site edging into the Top 10. After all, this is where users come for patches, downloads, and live-chat support. And prospective Quicken customers come here to test-drive the freebie trial version.

RANKINGS ARE BASED ON AUDIENCE DATA PROVIDED BY NIELSEN/NETRATINGS FOR OCTOBER 2000 THROUGH MARCH 2001, AND DO NOT INCLUDE TRAFFIC TO PROPRIETARY CHANNELS OF YAHOO! OR AOL.

SOURCES OF STATISTICS: 1) AND 2) PEW INTERNET & AMERICAN LIFE PROJECT (STUDY OF ADULT NET SURFERS), JUNE 2001; 3) AND 4) INTUIT



Lou Dobbs

The host of *Lou Dobbs Moneyline* returned to CNN after a stint at Space.com. Here, he gleans lessons from a chastened market and explains how the Net changed financial reporting

"Considering the tremendous rise and spectacular fall of the dot-com stock market "bubble," few people are unaware of how deeply the popularization of the Internet has affected financial culture. More Americans now own equities than at any time in our history, and such widespread participation seems to be a fact of modern life. For better or worse, this enthusiasm was fueled by dot-com mania.

Far less understood is the degree to which the Web has changed financial journalism. The rise of such sites as **The Motley Fool [fool.com]** and **CBS MarketWatch [marketwatch.com]** quickly demonstrated how this very powerful medium, even in its nascent stage, could change dramatically in response to user input.

Conversely, in newspaper and television content, the user plays a relatively passive role, which scared some old-media faithful early in the game. I remember the two views that television people first held about the Net: that it lacked the resources to compete and should be ignored; and that it was a threat to what we do and should be crushed.

Both those initial thoughts were wrong. Our experience at **CNN.com** is that traffic actually rises with developments on our news shows. Our Web sites, including **CNNfn [cnnfn.com]**, are critically important on both a stand-alone basis and as an adjunct to cable programming.

Interestingly, the brokerage industry learned the same lesson that television newscasters did: The Web has simply augmented the pie, not redistributed the pieces. The day trader who acts on some impulse to buy and sell every three minutes—may she rest in peace—has been replaced by those of us in the market in 401(k)s and pension funds. But the Net is still an efficient way to trade stocks. And by organizing financial reporting in a way that is most convenient to the user, it has created a higher level of efficiency in the marketplace."

STATE OF THE NET

HEALTH

As more consumers used the Net to monitor their own bodies, health sites began to monitor industry conduct

Five years ago, the Net was already brimming with Web sites eager to bite into the trillion-dollar health care pie. The pioneers were content-driven, with a few rudimentary tools. But sites soon diversified into multiservice centers, not only luring visitors with everything from digital calorie counters to online medical consultations, but also selling health care products. With all that potential for big money, shady cyberpharmacies proliferated—along with scandal and controversy. Even the once-venerable **Drkoop.com** was not immune: In 1999, *The New York Times* discovered that the site's recommended hospitals were in fact paid advertisers. Fortunately, physicians around the world began worrying early on about the reliability of health sites. Hence the birth, in 1996, of the **Health on the Net Foundation: HON Code of Conduct [www.hon.ch/honcode/conduct]**; and, just last year, of the **eHealth Code of Ethics [ihealthcoalition.org/ethics/ehcode.html]**, spearheaded by George D. Lundberg, M.D. True, no one has yet found an effective way to enforce these rules of conduct. But as the Net economy withers, the less-credentialed players are dropping off, making it easier for consumers to zero in on reputable sites. Don't believe everything you read, however. In a major study, published in *The Journal of the American Medical Association* in May, that focused on some of the most searched-for health topics on the Internet, researchers found that for breast cancer, 63 percent of the information was correct and complete; for depression, the figure was 44 percent. Moreover, the report noted, searching for relevant data requires lots of patience. But that hasn't stopped consumers from logging on. As Brooks Edwards, M.D., medical editor in chief of **MayoClinic.com**, puts it: "The dot-com bubble may have burst on Wall Street, but the use of health information on the Net only continues to grow on Main Street." Nearly 100 million Americans use the Web to find medical information. Though the financial state of e-health remains in flux, the physical state of consumers can only get better as they take a more active role in monitoring their own bodies. **JOANNE CHEN**

86 PERCENT

Percentage of surfers who say the Net has improved the way they get health care information: 35

Percentage who say it's important to retrieve health information without having to talk to anyone: 80

Percentage who say they're concerned about getting information from an unreliable source online: 86

Percentage who check to see who provides information: 58

Percentage who asked a doctor about a prescription after visiting online health sites: 54

Most-researched illness online: allergies

10 Most Popular Health Sites

1 WEBMD
[webmd.com]

The doctor is in—and seemingly everywhere: WebMD provides content to the health channels at AOL, Yahoo!, Excite, Lycos, MSN, and Netscape. Information on practically every disease and condition keeps users coming back.

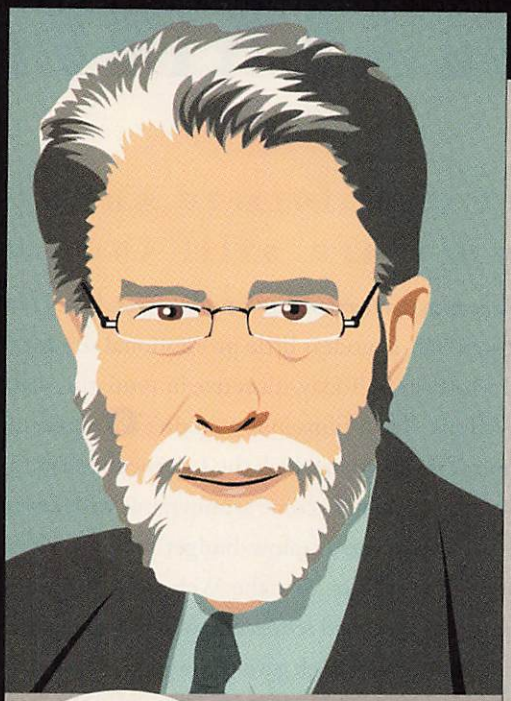
2 EDIETS.COM
[ediets.com]

For $125 a year, subscribers get customized diets, fitness regimes, and online support groups. Fine, but how does a pay-for site rank so high? Maybe it's the free features, which include a tip-laden newsletter, and tools to calculate your body mass index and target heart rate.

3 IVILLAGE.COM: HEALTH
[ivillagehealth.com]

iVillage's health area covers issues of concern to women in far greater detail than other major medical sites. But that's just part of the appeal: Support groups—170 of them—help visitors cope with depression, infertility, eating disorders, cancer, stress, motherhood, and more.

SOURCE OF STATISTICS: 1) PEW INTERNET & AMERICAN LIFE PROJECT (STUDY OF ADULT NET SURFERS), JUNE 2001; 2), 3), AND 4) IBID., NOVEMBER 2000; 5) CYBER DIALOGUE 2000; 6) CYBER DIALOGUE 2001



George D. Lundberg, M.D.

The former editor of *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, now at Medscape, predicts more and more docs consulting via the Web

"Before I became an editor, I was running a pathology lab in Los Angeles County. Tests were done by the thousands, and delays in passing information from the lab to a doctor interfered with a doctor's ability to treat patients. Being able to transmit information online over long distances, flawlessly and cheaply, was a wonderful advancement.

Internet tools that help consumers manage their own health—checking blood pressure, monitoring diabetes—are here to stay. Within the next five years, physician-to-physician consultations online will become extremely common. More images will be transmitted, and more decisions made, without worrying about the fact that the best doctor for providing a second opinion is thousands of miles away.

I think physicians will sort through patient security concerns. And unless they know a patient personally, doctors will be conservative in what they prescribe online. Right now, people are doing research to find out which conditions can be treated over the Internet alone and which cannot.

Thanks to the ethics codes we've set up [details on previous page], I don't think we'll see the government regulating health sites directly. I expect the government to regulate actions people take on the Internet based on existing law. For example, the online sale of prescription products is subject to the same state and federal laws that regulate drugstores.

Have health sites been harmed by the dot-bomb trend? Sure. But a few companies have held firm—those with solid ethics and a sound business plan. It has become clear that, rather than being a complete alternative to conventional health care practices, the Internet is simply an additional method by which patients can seek information and assistance—and by which doctors can provide it."

10 MAYOCLINIC.COM
[mayoclinic.com]

You don't need a Harvard medical degree to know what the attraction is here: access to the wisdom of Mayo Clinic doctors and researchers. It's as close as the famed institution comes to making house calls.

9 IVILLAGE.COM: HEALTH: QUIZ CENTRAL
[ivillagehealth.com/quiz]

Users think they're merely having fun testing their knowledge of physical and mental conditions, but all the while they're really learning something at this iVillage health channel site. It's the sneakiest trick since Mom crushed aspirin into your applesauce. And just as effective.

8 HEALTHANDAGE.COM
[www.healthandage.com]

With 35 million Americans over the age of 65, and more and more of them online, it's little surprise to see this site in the Top 10. Special emphasis on such conditions as Alzheimer's disease and osteoporosis makes HealthandAge a favorite of mature Web surfers.

7 DRKOOP.COM
[drkoop.com]

The former U.S. Surgeon General may have gotten egg on his face for questionable business practices (see report, previous page). But content from such partners as the National Institutes of Health has since rehabilitated the site's reputation. And where else will you find a bladder-control calculator?

6 MSN: HEALTH
[health.msn.com]

Marry the Net's most popular health site, WebMD, with the No. 3 Internet portal, MSN, and you have a busy site. Beyond the WebMD content, users get links to health-related items on MSN: Shopping, as well as yellow pages listings that help you find local health care providers.

5 THE BREAST CANCER SITE
[thebreastcancersite.com]

It's for a good cause, it takes roughly 10 seconds of your time, and it doesn't cost a cent. Click a button and the site's sponsors donate money that buys mammograms for underprivileged women. Every 45,000 clicks guarantee another mammogram, so this is one site where popularity could mean life or death.

4 DRUGSTORE.COM
[drugstore.com]

An online pharmacy can move a lot of Band-Aids if it snags the Health & Beauty aisle at Amazon.com. And it can move a lot of prescriptions if it partners with Rite Aid, so customers can order online for same-day pickup at their local pharmacy. Also a big draw: the site's ePunchCard rewards program.

RANKINGS ARE BASED ON AUDIENCE DATA PROVIDED BY NIELSEN/NETRATINGS FOR OCTOBER 2000 THROUGH MARCH 2001, AND DO NOT INCLUDE TRAFFIC TO PROPRIETARY CHANNELS OF YAHOO! AND AOL.

STATE OF THE NET

ENTERTAINME

The Net transformed entertainment, but old media are still the content kings

Type **[movies.warnerbros.com/twister]** into your browser. It will lead you to the Severe Weather Institute Research Lab, a modest little promotional site for the movie *Twister,* with some cute animated whirlwinds. Today, it's retro; in 1996, this was state of the art. But at least *Twister* had a Web site—most films in 1996 didn't. Across all sectors, entertainment has proved to be one of the areas in which the Internet has had the most cultural impact. And a few landmark projects have become synonymous with key industry developments. Film had *The Blair Witch Project,* the ultralow-budget 1999 hit whose success was fueled by amateur sites, proving to studios that the Web was a promotional gold mine. Music had **Napster [napster.com]**, the file-sharing program that launched scores of lawsuits, waking the record labels up to the possibility of online distribution. Sports had fantasy leagues, which gave fans a good excuse to spend all day clicking through reams of statistics. But none of these things happened in a vacuum. The *Blair Witch* hype was fueled by movie rumor networks such as **Ain't It Cool News [aintitcool.com]**. The promise of increased bandwidth made Napster a real threat. And who would have been crunching those sports stats without well-financed megahubs such as **ESPN [espn.com]**? Amusingly enough, five years ago, many believed that the future of Web entertainment lay in original content. Today, the list of original-programming casualties goes on and on: DEN, Entertaindom, Pop, Pseudo. Napster succeeded because it could get us the songs we could also buy in real stores. The *Blair Witch* hype whetted our appetites for a movie playing in honest-to-God movie theaters. And fantasy leagues are exciting because they deal with real players. Old media, it seems, still rule.

BILGE EBIRI

5 Most Popular Music Sites

1 REAL [real.com]

With the demise of free Napster, Real.com claimed the music spotlight, and it's not hard to understand why: The site enables its 200 million-plus users to listen to tunes on their PC. It makes stuff easy to find, too, with a guide that links you to sound clips and videos across the Web, in all genres (well, maybe those Mozart videos are a tough find).

2 MSN: WINDOWS MEDIA.COM [windowsmedia.com]

If Windows Media Player is built into every Windows PC, why does the site trail Real.com? Users who like streaming music usually have both players—and Real.com has the more robust guide. Still, information from the top-flight All Music Guide keeps fans coming back for more than upgrades and tech support.

75%

Number of Americans who have downloaded music files from the Internet: 37 million

Percentage of people who download music who say it isn't stealing: more than 75

Percentage of music-file sharers who purchase music online: 54

Percentage of all adults who purchase music online: 43

Number of audio files available on MP3.com: 967,000

Amount Vivendi Universal paid to acquire MP3.com: $372 million

NT

3 **CDNOW**
[cdnow.com]

Sure, its business is selling you the tunes, but CDNow is also a first-rate place to learn about what's out there, via links to news articles, reviews, and artist sites. And when cash is tight, the 20-plus radio channels keep the hits coming.

4 **MTV.COM**
[mtv.com]

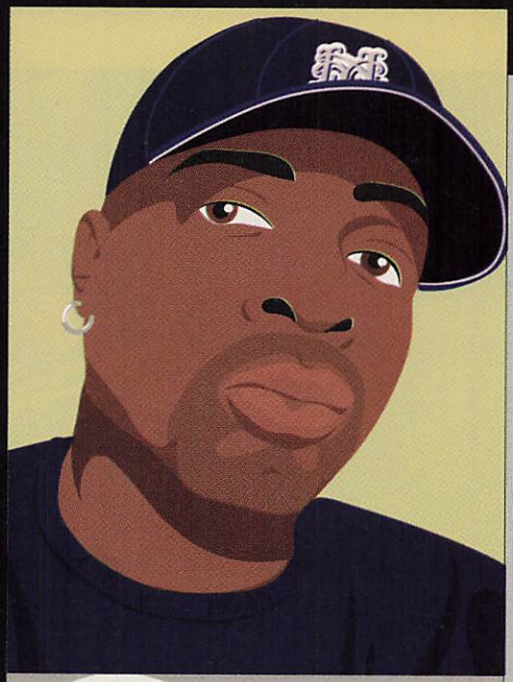
This site appeals to those who want their MTV but don't want their Christina Aguilera coverage interrupted by Clapton. Users can watch favorite videos over and over. Die-hard fans come for the Britney Spears photo flip book.

5 **MP3.COM**
[mp3.com]

The days of gratis Top 10 tunes are over. But with nearly a million songs from emerging artists, MP3.com is one of the biggest free music repositories on the Web. Selections are well organized, so frustration runs low and repeat business high. Downloading guides bring in beginners; burning tutorials draw veterans.

RANKINGS ARE BASED ON AUDIENCE DATA PROVIDED BY NIELSEN/NETRATINGS FOR OCTOBER 2000 THROUGH MARCH 2001, AND DO NOT INCLUDE TRAFFIC TO PROPRIETARY CHANNELS OF YAHOO! OR AOL

SOURCES OF STATISTICS: 1) PEW INTERNET & AMERICAN LIFE PROJECT (STUDY OF ADULT NET SURFERS), APRIL 2001; 2) IBID., SEPT. 2000; 3) AND 4) CYBER DIALOGUE; 5) AND 6) MP3.COM



Chuck D

The cofounder of legendary rappers Public Enemy confronted the industry head-on with his Internet ventures. What excites him now is artistic exchange

"The Net scared the hell out of people in the music business at first. Then they got involved in it to protect their properties. Today, the major record labels have co-opted the Net, just as with any other technology. The public got a head start on the industry, and then the industry cried foul.

One of the most revolutionary things of the past five years was Al Teller's online label, Atomic Pop. He took a lot of hits for fixing the price barometer. That's taboo in the industry—you don't mess with the standard retail price. Of course, Napster and MP3 as a format were also revolutionary because they went around the corporations. The five majors control the record industry; three corporations control the radio industry; and one controls music videos. The majors are now trying to co-opt online music because they know they can't kill it.

I have been involved with the Net since 1994, trying to build service areas for the genre of hip-hop with **Rapstation [rapstation.com]** and other ventures. While it was a gold rush for everybody else, almost no black companies were funded. It was the old boys' network. Now, at the end of the dot-bomb era, Rapstation is still here, still standing.

People who create hip-hop and other genres are now exchanging music they make in their own digital studios via the Net. You've got the majors, you've got the indies, and now you've got the Inties—the producers, artists, and songwriters who are able to participate in this business thanks to digital distribution. When people ask me how they should get started in music, I tell them to start a site. The Net is creating a parallel industry, and you'll gradually see more labels and artists getting started on the Web. I'm trying to create an online minor-league development pool that can go up the ladder. We've never had that in music before."

5 Most Popular Entertainment Sites

1 **DISNEY.COM**
[disney.com]

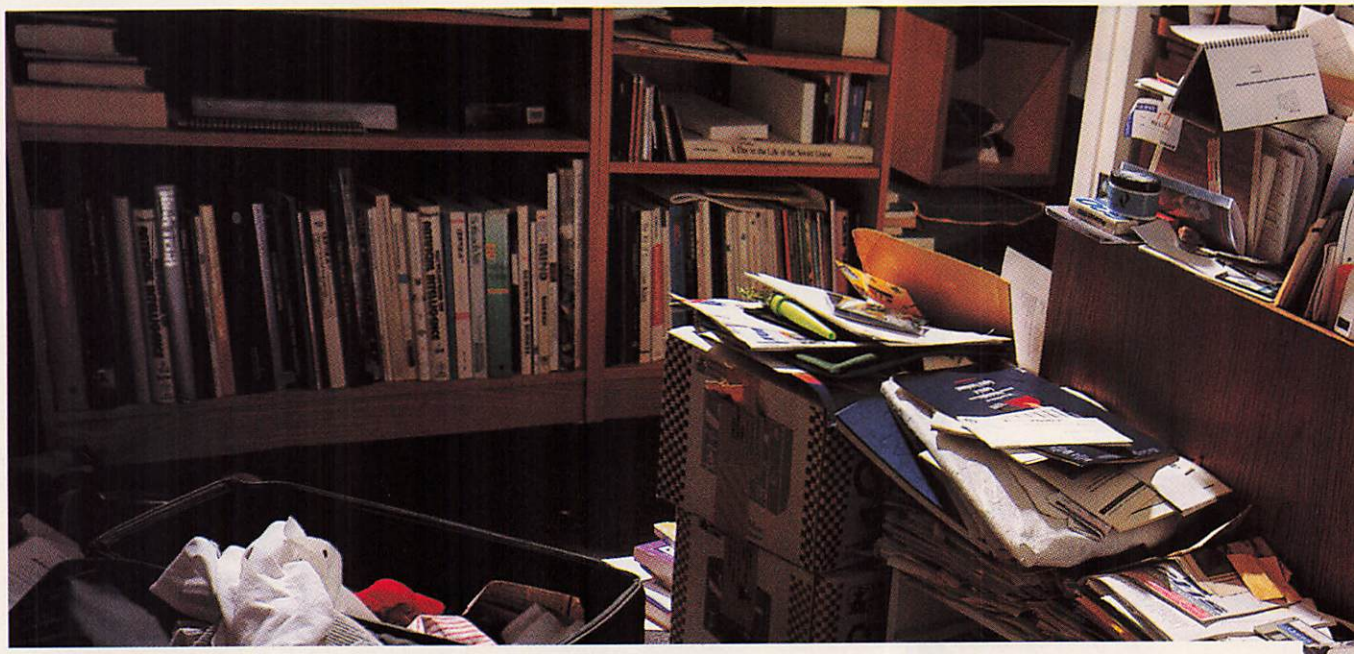
Finding this site is a lot easier than finding a short line at Epcot. Beyond the huge exposure it gets at other Disney-owned properties (including ABC.com and Family.com), it benefits from prime placement on MSN's Kids channel. And like the theme parks and movies, it packs 'em in by appealing to kids of all ages.

2 **E! ONLINE**
[eonline.com]

The cable channel may run 24 hours a day, but that's evidently not enough for entertainment addicts. The lure of E! Online is that fans can cut straight to the dirt, thanks to such Web gossip columnists as Ted Casablanca and such special features as Fashion Police (detailing the sartorial dos and don'ts of Hollywood celebs).

3 **MSN: ENTERTAINMENT**
[entertainment.msn.com]

Like that host who can't cook but knows the hottest takeout joints in town, Microsoft serves up content from Top 10 sites such as E! Online and Rollingstone.com. Integration with Citysearch (for movie times) and MSN's own shopping channel (to snag those DVDs) offers extra incentive to visit.



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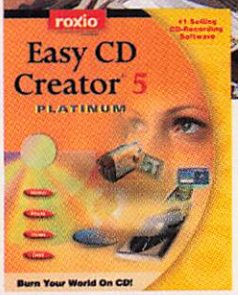
Check out roxio.com/EasyCD5. Mac addicts look for Toast® 5.



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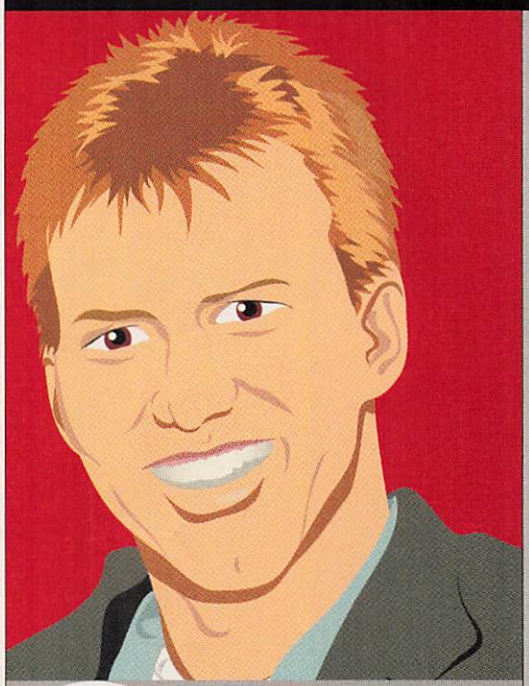
4 MOVIEFONE
[moviefone.com]

Now that it's adding a surcharge for buying advance movie tickets, we wonder how Moviefone's popularity will hold up. Probably pretty well, considering the click-and-buy process is a whole lot quicker than the phone version (which also charges a fee).

5 THE INTERNET MOVIE DATABASE
[imdb.com]

As much as we like to watch movies, we like to argue about them even more. The Internet Movie Database is the go-to site for closure on all those friendship-wrecking debates, such as how tall Tom Cruise is (5 foot 7).



Chris Moore

The CEO of LivePlanet, an interactive entertainment company he cofounded with Ben Affleck and Matt Damon, sees the Net as connective tissue between creators and their fans

"The last five years have proved that the computer screen is not the place to put up passive entertainment. Most people don't have a way to watch good-quality video on the Net. The trailer for *The Lord of the Rings* was such a big deal when it went online, but think about it: For *The Grinch*, they created a three-minute teaser, put it on a satellite, and told any TV distribution company they could have it for free. And 185 million people saw it within 18 hours. You're reaching way more people that way than through the Web. And let's face it, if you're Michael Bay and you want everybody to see how cool *Pearl Harbor* is, the last thing you want to do is make it a 30MB downloadable file.

The communicative aspect of the Net is what's really important. And the best way to use the Net for entertainment is as the connective tissue between fans and participants. What'll be really interesting is when you have that communication on a mass level. Project Greenlight [LivePlanet's online screenwriters contest] has created such a strong community that we're happy just to be along for the ride, even though we started it.

What's really changed this business is the rise of such sites as **Ain't It Cool News [aintitcool.com]** and **Dark Horizons [darkhorizons.com]**—if there's a test screening, it's going to be posted on the Web. Studios tend to go inherently with what's worked before. But if you have 2 million people saying, "You know, I'd really like to see this," then things change. *American Pie* [which Moore produced] was a great success because it was created by a bunch of guys saying, "Y'know, it's been a long time since we've seen a *Porky's* movie. We should make one." That will continue to happen as you have a more two-way relationship with your audience."

5 Most Popular Sports Sites

1 ESPN
[espn.com]

There's not a sport around that doesn't get coverage here, which makes the site equally attractive to baseball fans, golfers, and snowboarders (yes, dude, you're in luck). And for ESPN cable junkies, it's a 24/7 gateway to streaming video clips and radio shows.

2 CBS SPORTSLINE.COM
[sportsline.com]

Seems like SportsLine's lowbrow/highbrow approach—tracking pro wrestling as well as cricket—has paid off, even if the site doesn't cover quite as many sports, quite as thoroughly, as ESPN (sorry, motocross fans). An added incentive to browse its pages: A rewards program gives you points for surfing.

3 NFL.COM
[nfl.com]

Its partnership with ESPN doesn't hurt attendance. But NFL.com really scores by targeting the broadest possible audience: A subsite for kids explains who does what on the field; a Hall of Fame section tells what O.J. did outside the courtroom (well, maybe not everything); and NFL for Her caters to the football widow.

NT

4 CNN SPORTS ILLUSTRATED
[cnnsi.com]

Just think how popular this site would be if people only knew about the swimsuit models. But we know: You come here for the sports. Yup, we believe you. In fact, we almost actually do. Where else will you find your favorite *SI* writers taking questions from readers, contributing columns, and participating in chats? The site is easy to find, too: It powers the sports channel at CNN.com.

5 NASCAR.COM
[nascar.com]

For stock-car enthusiasts, there really is no other choice. Forget the race schedules and track descriptions. What fans really want—and get—are chats with top stock-car drivers; interactive tools that show how the racers stack up; and RaceCasts, so you can listen to the commentary and driver-crew conversations during the action. The site's also the place to buy official NASCAR merchandise (including 70 different types of drinkware). Even other sports sites pay deference to NASCAR.com: It's featured on both CNN's and AOL's sports channels.

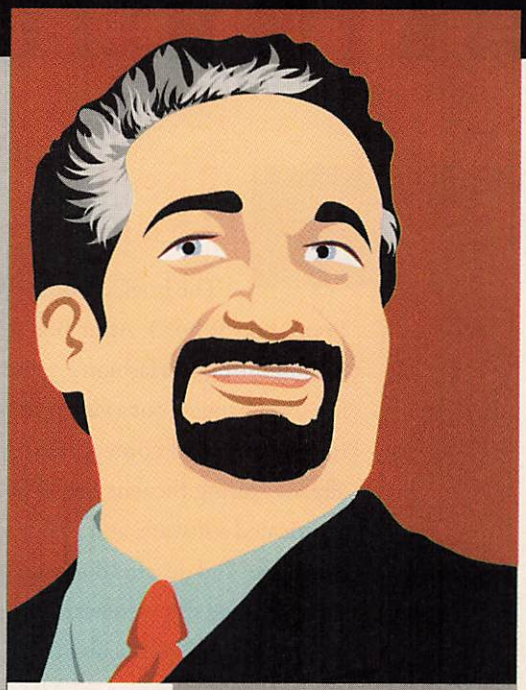
RANKINGS ARE BASED ON AUDIENCE DATA PROVIDED BY NIELSEN/NETRATINGS FOR OCTOBER 2000 THROUGH MARCH 2001, AND DO NOT INCLUDE TRAFFIC TO PROPRIETARY CHANNELS OF YAHOO! OR AOL.

"The sports sites have gone through three stages of evolution. Initially they were basically promotional; most of the clubs put up their yearbooks, their statistics, pictures, et cetera. In phase two, people realized they could now turn this into a revenue source by generating traffic and selling advertising around it.

Stage three is where our club is now: We're an Internet company. The **Washington Capitals [washingtoncaps.com]** sell more than 60 percent of our tickets online. We launch all of our news first on the Web. For example, a lot of people were saying that they wanted to buy season tickets but couldn't afford all of the payment up front. So we decided we'd do a deal where they could pay it without interest on their credit card over six months. We put that information up, and they could see the status of their account on the Web. We found the problem online, and we created the solution online. It's what we're about.

In the next five years we will see more broadband applications. There is a market for broadcasting games online, but we'll make more money by selling it as a league. Lack of bandwidth, and of a workable business model, have been holding things up so far.

In some ways, the dot-com crash was a positive thing. For those who were tentative about going online, it gave them permission to sit it out. But whenever you have people turn their attention somewhere else, there's great opportunity for guys who are willing to dig a little deeper in the mine."



Ted Leonsis

The former president of American Online, who now owns the Washington Capitals hockey team, predicts we'll pay to watch major-league Webcasts as broadband expands

65

Number of U.S. households that will have access to interactive television by 2006: 37 million

Percentage increase in use of streaming media between 1999 and 2000: 65

Number of short and feature movies offered on Ifilm: 80,000

Number of unique visitors to E! Online, day after Oscars 2000: 1 million; number after Oscars 2001: 1.9 million

Percentage increase in E! Online traffic during the week following the Kidman-Cruise breakup: 60

SOURCES OF STATISTICS: 1) FORRESTER; 2) NIELSEN/NETRATINGS; 3) IFILM; 4) AND 5) E! ONLINE

STATE OF THE NET

SHOPPING

Boo.com provides a cautionary tale about the rise and fall of e-tailers

The brief, checkered history of e-commerce can be divided into three distinct epochs: Before Boo ("Boo Who?"), After Boo ("Boohoo"), and the New Boo ("Boo Two"). Boo, of course, was **Boo.com**, the impossibly hip fashion e-tailer no one had heard of until it imploded very publicly in May 2000. Before Boo, hanging out a virtual shingle sounded cheap, easy, and smart. No overhead! No middlemen! Launch it, and they will come. And for a fleeting moment in 1999, it did seem possible. **Amazon.com** was already scaring the wits out of bookstores with its 1-Click ordering. But then the cost of warehouses, sophisticated software, and customer service began scaring the wits out of investors. And despite Boo's appeal to fashionistas, the takers for its virtual shopping trip were virtually none. Before long, everyone was hailing Boo's swift and spectacular demise as proof that Net shopping had been a stupendously bad idea. After Boo, a long list of retailers—eToys, Furniture.com, Pets.com, and PlanetRx.com, to name but a few—disappeared faster than an XFL advertiser. The survivors yanked their Super Bowl ads, installed toll-free phone numbers, cut off the freebies, mailed catalogs, merged with brick-and-mortar heavyweights...in short, began acting like conventional stores. Of the top 50 e-commerce sites today, brick-and-mortar retailers outnumber their virtual peers. But even with all those abandoned shopping carts littering cyberspace, things are looking up. According to Nielsen/NetRatings, nearly half of all American adults have bought something over the Internet. Industry analysts predict that sales will grow from $118 billion worldwide this year to $707 billion in 2005. Miss Boo has even made a comeback, under the auspices of **Fashionmall.com**. Next thing you know, the Pets.com sock puppet will be the host of its own reality TV show. **LAURA FISHER KAISER**

Percentage of people who say the Internet improves their ability to shop: 34

Total revenue from goods sold by Uncle Sam via the Internet in 2000: $3.6 billion

Total for Amazon.com: $2.8 billion

Percentage of surfers who worry about credit card theft during online transactions: 54

Percentage who reported stopping a transaction before completing it: 24

$3.6 billion

10 Most Popular Shopping Sites

1 AMAZON.COM [amazon.com]

Imagine our shock when we discovered that Amazon was the most-visited online store. We knew that competitors—make that *former* competitors—such as Toys "R" Us and Borders liked it enough to let Amazon run their own Net businesses. We had heard about the specialty shops—wireless phones, cameras, computer games—the site had added. We had seen all the discount coupons offered to entice customers to buy. But we just never put it all together. Luckily for Amazon, its 29 million customers have.

2 BARNES & NOBLE.COM [bn.com]

We think Barnes & Noble's success is due in no small part to the integration of its virtual and physical stores. Buy something on the site you don't like? Return it to your local B&N, where you can find termi-

nals that let you order online what you don't see on the shelves.

3 CDNOW
[cdnow.com]

Sure, CDNow is looking pretty good now that we have to buy our tunes again. But those 30 percent discounts aren't exactly rare online. One reason folks flock here is that CDNow makes it easy to figure out what you want to buy, with song samples, album reviews, artist interviews, and more.

4 JCPENNEY
[jcpenney.com]

Evidently, your mother has discovered the Internet. Actually, it's really little wonder the veteran retailer has a booming site. As the nation's largest catalog merchant of general merchandise, it's long had experience selling outside the mall.

5 DELL
[dell.com]

The worldwide leader in PC sales, Dell does approximately half its business on the Web. Support is a big draw, with customers logging on to download software updates and user's guides. Dell technicians are just an e-mail form away.

6 APPLE
[apple.com]

Apple may boast just 5 percent of the computer market, but it's got 100 percent of the Macintosh market. Like Dell, Apple gears its site for both sales and support, so even after you've snagged that titanium-clad PowerBook (sure, rub it in), you're quite likely to return.

7 WALMART.COM
[walmart.com]

It almost makes JCPenney seem hip. But Walmart often beats its rivals on price. And where else can you pick up a scooter, a Tom Clancy novel, and a diamond ring all at once?

8 ARTIST DIRECT
[artistdirect.com]

This site gets the clicks because it caters to the fan who buys everything. Not just the albums, but the merchandise, too, and Artist Direct offers plenty: Offspring T-shirts, Godsmack baseball caps, Eminem dog tags, and, for those with a healthy self-image, an 'N Sync stuffed plush tiger. We know—it's for the kids.

9 SEARS.COM
[sears.com]

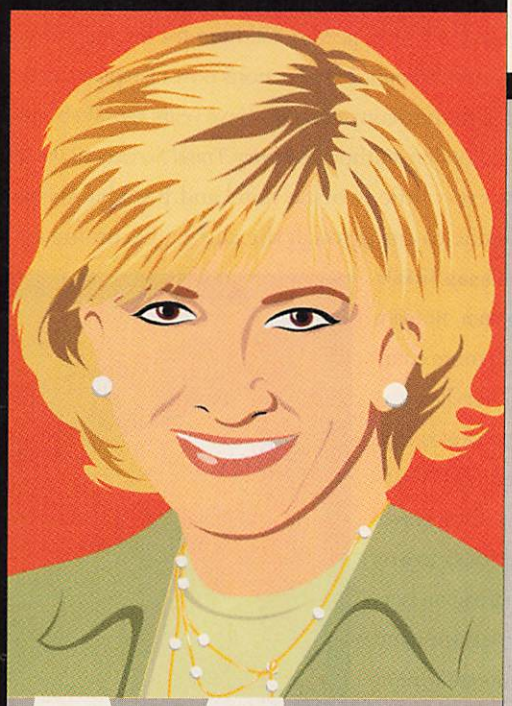
Well, it's official: Every store from the least-hip mall of your youth has got a site in the Top 10. Frankly, we're surprised Sears.com didn't rank a bit higher, with frequent promotions such as free delivery and its popular PartsDirect section, where you can order what you need to keep your Sears gear in shape.

10 HALLMARK.COM
[hallmark.com]

When you care enough to send the very best—but not quite enough to leave the house—there's Hallmark.com. We can see the temptation: Browse for a Hallmark card, insert a message, and let Hallmark stamp and send it. Personalized calendars and reminders keep you coming back for the next occasion.

SOURCES OF STATISTICS: 1) PEW INTERNET & AMERICAN LIFE PROJECT (STUDY OF ADULT NET SURFERS), JUNE 2001; 2) AND 3) IBID., MAY 2001; 4) IBID., SEPTEMBER 2000; 5) IBID., DECEMBER 2000

RANKINGS ARE BASED ON AUDIENCE DATA PROVIDED BY NIELSEN/NETRATINGS FOR OCTOBER 2000 THROUGH MARCH 2001, AND DO NOT INCLUDE TRAFFIC TO PROPRIETARY CHANNELS OF YAHOO! OR AOL.



Martha Stewart

The chairwoman and chief executive of Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia talks about shopping sites that work—and what excites her about the Net

"I don't enjoy shopping that much. I would rather spend my time driving to a beautiful mountain hike than to a store. If I could efficiently find everything I need on the Internet and have it delivered safely to my home, I would be thrilled. I do buy books, dog toys, clothes, gardening things, stuff on eBay. (I also have plenty of things to sell on eBay, but I haven't had time!) I think many people feel the same way I do.

The e-commerce sites that failed spent too much money on the wrong things. Building a brand takes time, effort, extreme caution, and a lot of investment. You have to be trusted. You have to be needed. Most of those companies were none of those things.

You shouldn't presume to know what customers want, as many sites do now. I don't want to get a "Dear Martha" e-mail message that supposes I want a pair of yellow shorts because I bought a pair of yellow shorts last year. You have to develop a relationship with your customers and let them ask you, "I need a taupe-colored cotton sun hat. Do you have one?" We're working hard on the next generation of our site for this fall, so customers can have a better dialogue.

What excites me about the Net? The reach! And the volume of information that's available. Now we have to be conscientious editors. You have to know that if you go to a site you will get accurate information.

I am very encouraged by people's curiosity and their willingness to experiment, to use the Net for saving time, not wasting time. That's what I find exciting and what I really want to help with."

STATE OF THE NET

TRAVEL

Despite online turbulence, when it comes to booking trips, folks are *flying* to the Net

Want to trek the Himalayas? Schedule a family reunion and loop in all the far-flung branches? Book a car at the Houston airport, then get a free map and driving directions? No problem. Within the past five years, Web users have become their own travel agents with surprisingly little fuss or confusion. Indeed, in the past two years alone, the use of traditional travel agencies has declined 29 percent. Since the launch of both **Travelocity.com** and **Expedia.com** in 1996, the Net has emerged as a near-perfect medium for buying what is essentially a virtual product: an e-ticket and printable itinerary. Almost a third of all online transactions now take place on travel sites—the only Net sector to enjoy increased revenues in 2000, the year of the dot-com crash. "Five years ago, Web surfers were hard-pressed to find lodging information online," recalls Durant Imboden, author of *Buying Travel Services on the Internet* and the guide of **About: Europe for Visitors [goeurope.about.com]**. "Now every little two-star hotel and B&B has its own site. The result has been a vast increase in clutter." Travelers continue to cut through the clutter, becoming ever-smarter shoppers. We've witnessed an evolution in ticketing sites—**Cheap Tickets [cheaptickets.com], Lowestfare.com, Priceline.com, Hotwire [hotwire.com], Orbitz [orbitz.com]**—each variation more competitive than the last. Improved customer service, enhanced cruise bookings, streaming destination videos, and extensive niche-travel programs are already here. What's next? Jupiter Media Metrix predicts that online travel purchases will increase from $18 billion in 2000 to $63 billion in 2006. The biggest players are focusing on better customization, more real-time wireless services, and easier ways to help you book dining and entertainment online. As your own virtual travel agent, you'll still be able to write your own ticket.

SUSAN BRESLOW SARDONE

1997

Percentage of surfers who get travel information online: 65

Percentage who have made a travel reservation online: 29

Average number of bookings per day on Orbitz during its first week online: 10,000

Number of people who now buy travel exclusively online: 7 million

Number of 747s filled by Expedia in January 2001: 997

In January 1998: 68

10 Most Popular Travel Sites

1 MAPQUEST [mapquest.com]

We may be a nation of frequent fliers, but the Great American Road Trip drives more people to the Net. MapQuest visitors request more than 20 million maps daily. Features like integration with the yellow and white pages—enter a name, get an address and a map—help keep the site busy. Part of AOL's Interactive Properties Group, the site gets exposure on bustling hubs such as Moviefone and Digitalcity.com.

2 TRAVELOCITY.COM [travelocity.com]

You'd have to be a bona fide Luddite to miss Travelocity: It powers the travel sections on AOL, Yahoo!, and Excite. But the real draw is the site's convenience and scope. Users can access more than 400 airlines, 50,000 hotels, and 50 car rental companies. And innovative tools include one that lets travel partners browse the site together from different computers.

3 EXPEDIA.COM [expedia.com]

It figures that Expedia and Travelocity would be neck-and-neck. For years, the two full-service

travel sites have battled it out. Part of Expedia's success can be attributed to the marketing muscle of parent Microsoft. But credit, too, should go to popular features such as the dedicated golf travel channel and Price Matcher, a Priceline-like reverse auction for cheap tickets.

4 AMERICAN EXPRESS: AIR, CAR, AND HOTEL RESERVATIONS
[itn.net]

Busy travelers flock here for one reason: to book trips fast. Users fill out one quick form. Then the site's Rapid Rez feature can secure the flight, the hotel, and the car all at once.

5 SOUTHWEST
[southwest.com]

Little surprise that Southwest is the busiest airline site on the Web. It was the first major carrier to sell tickets online, in 1996, and it continues to woo customers aggressively with generous incentives, such as double reward miles for booking flights online.

6 DELTA
[delta.com]

Like other airlines, Delta attracts bargain hunters with special Net-only fares. But it also gives those with deep pockets a reason to log on: They can upgrade to first or business class right from the site.

7 AMERICAN AIRLINES
[aa.com]

Good things come to those who wait—at least on this site. Web-only deals reward those who can travel on a day's notice, as well as those who need a week to prepare.

8 CHEAP TICKETS
[cheaptickets.com]

The lure of Cheap Tickets can be summed up in two words: cheap tickets. The site has agreements with 50 airlines. It buys their unsold tickets for a song, then sells them to you for a song plus a little bit extra. The impact from Orbitz remains to be seen.

9 MAPS ON US
[mapsonus.com]

It's the Junior Soprano of map sites, but this second banana does pretty well for itself. It helps that Maps on Us offers all the requisite features, including turn-by-turn driving directions. It helps even more to be owned by Switchboard Inc., which has integrated the site into its popular online directories.

10 NORTHWEST AIRLINES
[nwa.com]

Although Northwest has never scored high on the glamour index, its Web site has been working overtime to win over travelers, with Web-only fares and a virtual check-in process that allows you to print your own boarding pass.

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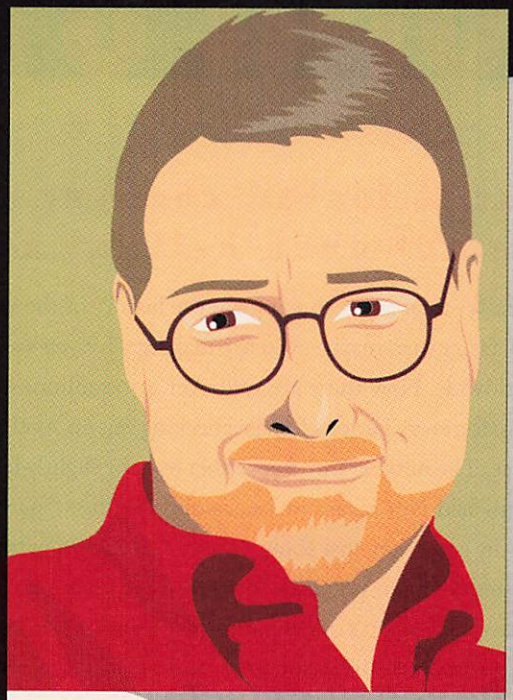
SOURCES OF STATISTICS: 1) AND 2) PEW INTERNET & AMERICAN LIFE PROJECT (STUDY OF ADULT NET SURFERS), JUNE 2001; 3) TWCROSSROADS.COM; 4) PHOCUS WRIGHT; 5) AND 6) EXPEDIA



Peter Greenberg

The travel editor for NBC's *Today* show casts a wary eye at Orbitz, and forecasts a future in which you'll have agents in the palm of your hand

When travel first hit the Web, consumers were proud that they were able to do the proper clicks and fill in the right boxes—only to find out that they weren't necessarily getting the best deals. Now you have a whole new generation of people saying, "Wait a minute. If we can't browse the Internet like we browse the supermarket, then we don't want to play." So sites such as Travelocity and Expedia are giving people better comparison-shopping opportunities.

Of course, when the airlines saw all these seats being sold by online agents, they thought they could make more money selling directly to the public. Hence **Orbitz [orbitz.com]**, which just launched in June. The jury is still out on whether Orbitz is a good thing for consumers. Initially, it might come across with some really good deals. And why not? It's owned by the airlines. So it could hit the ground running, and in the process make some of these other companies go out of business. We have here the potential for a huge restraint-of-trade situation.

No matter which site you use, if you want round-trip tickets, you can pretty well play the game on the Internet. But I'll give you an example of where it doesn't work.

The other day I needed to book a ticket from Milwaukee to Minneapolis, then from Minneapolis to L.A., L.A. to Toronto, and back to L.A. I did it on the phone with a human being; the fare was $407 for the entire itinerary. I then tried it on the Internet, using every system possible. The lowest fare was $1,600! Any travel site that can bridge that gap will have a competitive edge.

The other coming thing is streaming technology. Travel agents will be able to stream themselves to your PalmPilot and speak to you directly about where the bargains are. I think that's unstoppable—and it should be unstoppable, because it gives you choices. And it connects back to a real human being.

STATE OF THE NET

COMPUTING

Technology is faster, cheaper, and smaller. And we're not even halfway there

The Net has grown faster than any technology in the history of the world—faster than printing, faster than television, faster than maybe even fire making. Five years ago there were about 50 million of us online worldwide. Now there are well over 400 million. The balance of things has changed, too. In 1996, for every curious female checking out an AOL chatroom, there were nine guys waiting to pounce. The numbers are now either even or slightly female-heavy. Just 14 percent of public schoolrooms had Net access in '96, as opposed to 77 percent in 2000. And since a reasonably Web-worthy computer cost about $2,000 (compared with around $800 today), a real economic barrier existed for many potential Netizens. Things have improved. And because we now know and believe that the Net's opportunities are worth extending to all, things will get even better. Circa 2001, the trendy Net user caroms down the sidewalk as he downloads baseball scores to his cell phone. We're not done with the traditional computer yet, but certainly we've broadened our horizons. To quote an ancient and venerable online hangout, "And now?" Better, faster, smaller, cheaper—these are the promises of Moore's Law, which postulates that computers will essentially double in power every 18 months. Moore's Law is, according to its creator, likely to expire in around five to seven years, when the very physics of technology will be the barrier holding us back. (You can make a computer only so small before you can't see it or use it.) The past five years represent just over three iterations of Moore's Law in action. We have at least three left to go. Wherever we are heading, we're not even halfway there.

ANGELA GUNN

2/3

Number of Americans who had access to the Internet in May 2001: 174 million

Percentage who log on on weekdays: 60

On weekend days: 45

Number of surfers with work-only Net access who admit doing something extracurricular online: More than two-thirds

Percentage of banks, brokerages, and insurance or real estate companies that monitor employee Internet usage: 73

10 Most Popular Computing Sites

1 YAHOO!
[yahoo.com]

Yahoo! hasn't made it on looks. But behind the no-frills exterior lies a wealth of features that attract an enormously loyal following: online photo albums, a personal mailbox three times the size of Hotmail's, a Yahoo! Wallet that stores your shipping and credit card info for thousands of online merchants. Oh, and that huge directory of sites.

2 AOL ANYWHERE
[aol.com]

First, take the 29 million AOL subscribers who want to check their e-mail while they're away from their home PC. Then take the millions more who use AOL Instant Messenger. Finally, take all the folks—AOL members and nonmembers—who use AOL Hometown to host their Web pages. That adds up to a boatload of hits.

3 MSN
[msn.com]

MSN is the only portal to which you'll see a link whenever you check your Hotmail. Or check your finances at MoneyCentral. Or read the headlines at MSNBC. All that face time at other Microsoft properties helps. But MSN also earns fans with useful features like c2it, a Citibank money transfer service.

4 MICROSOFT
[microsoft.com]

Direct access to the world's leading software company appeals to just about every type of computer user (well, except Mac addicts): developers, gamers, administrators, Web surfers. Not to mention anyone who can't figure out Mail Merge in Word and needs support fast.

5 NETSCAPE
[netscape.com]

The place to get that *other* browser, along with all the plug-ins and updates you'll ever need. But once you've grabbed the downloads, it's tempting to come back for the content from other AOL Time Warner properties, such as People.com.

6 LYCOS
[lycos.com]

Celebrity news is provided by *The National Enquirer* and *Star Magazine*—need we say more to explain why Lycos still draws crowds? But the portal has always marched to a different drummer, with offbeat features such as Lycos Talk Radio, which lets any user create his own live talk show.

7 EXCITE
[excite.com]

It may not have the marketing might of AOL or Microsoft, but this portal benefits from top-flight content providers, such as WebMD for health, Realtor.com for home listings, and Pogo.com for games.

8 ALTAVISTA
[altavista.com]

In the cutthroat world of search engines, AltaVista has managed to survive—and prosper—by offering tools most of its competitors don't, including specialized engines for finding MP3s, video files, and images.

9 LOOKSMART
[looksmart.com]

When we saw LookSmart's No. 9 ranking, our first thought was LookAgain. But keep in mind that its databases are being searched every minute by users of MSN, Excite, and up to 370 Internet service providers.

10 GOOGLE
[google.com]

If we had bet money on Google's ranking, we'd be broke. It's the go-to search engine for everyone we know, because of its spookily accurate results. The ability to search half a billion archived Usenet posts should draw even more traffic. Ten? Not for long.

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Esther Dyson

The Internet pioneer, one of its first governing officials, worries about online privacy. But she also sees the Net bridging global barriers

"During the last five years a broader public actually got onto the Internet. People have more power over their own lives, and the power of large institutions is eroding.

On the other hand, we may soon long for the golden days of the "Open Net." Because five or 10 years from now, everybody on the Net will have some form of ID. I assume there will still be sites where there is free interchange. But in most places online, you'll be registered, rated, certified, and authenticated. It's going to be a challenge to fight for some of the freedoms we take for granted now. Privacy shouldn't be legislated by governments, but should be defined by individuals who control their own data.

I've been spending a lot of time recently in Central and Eastern Europe, where the Internet has a different flavor from here in the U.S. For example, I'm on the board of a commercial company that uses the Net to help people find jobs, and to help employers find workers and train them. That's a unique and vital service there, and you feel like you're doing something incredibly useful.

Fundamentally, the Net makes the world a smaller place. When I went to Russia in 1989, I had an MCI mail account which I didn't use much because there wasn't anyone to write to. Then I started communicating with the people I met in Russia, and it made the trip more valuable because I could communicate with them after I got back. The Net's not going to make the Serbs love the Croats or solve all these political problems, but it will encourage people to think more globally, which is great."

STATE OF THE NET

GAMES

After Quake shook the world, online games went from MUD to mainstream. So did players

I knew the Net had come a long way when I blew the dust off my first book, *Internet Games Directory* (Que, 1996), and noticed that its cover boasted "FTP Sites!" and "Hundreds of MUDs!" Those two acronyms stand for *file transfer protocol* and *multi-user dungeons*, but don't worry if you've never heard of them. Before 1996, Net gaming was a niche pastime. Everything changed on August 30, 1996, when a little game called Quake hit retail shelves. The revolutionary—and controversial—3-D shooter became the hottest thing on the Net since porn, thanks to its heated 16-player action and its unprecedented community of players—who, when not playing Quake, swapped custom-made modifications. Ultima Online, which launched the following year, supported thousands of simultaneous players and spawned today's so-called persistent worlds, which exist even after the user logs off. If it weren't for Ultima, EverQuest gamers would not have spent much of last year selling their characters on eBay (before the practice was banned). Spending countless hours in digital dungeons isn't for everyone, and casual gaming has exploded on free multiplayer sites. Just about every classic card, board, casino, and tile game is now on the Web, as is nearly every conceivable TV-licensed game show (thanks, Regis). And gaming is no longer a boys-only club. Recent studies show that females make up 51 percent of today's online players, as well as 43 percent of computer and console game players. In 1999 the ill-fated Sega Dreamcast became the first video-game system to ship with a built-in modem. Sony, Microsoft, and Nintendo have since made a firm commitment to multiplayer gaming over a TV set. Indeed, Sony plans to incorporate AOL's instant-messaging, chat, and e-mail capabilities into the PlayStation 2 platform. Other trends include cell phone and PDA gaming. As cyberspace gaming options continue to proliferate, expect the quality of games to keep improving, too. **MARC SALTZMAN**

100,000

Percentage of time dedicated to gaming on home PCs: 31

Percentage dedicated to e-mailing: 21

Highest number of simultaneous users playing EverQuest: 100,000

Number of queries received per second from players seeking to join Quake III games: 8

Estimated revenue from online games, by 2005: $2.3 billion

10 Most Popular Game Sites

1 EA.COM
[ea.com]

Given the popularity of such Electronic Arts retail games as Madden 2001 and Tiger Woods PGA Tour, it's hardly surprising that a site offering tips, downloads, and online opponents would be a hit. But EA.com scores big even with those who don't buy the CD-ROMs. Players can relive the good old days by playing NHL '97 and Madden NFL '95 gratis. Look for more parlor gamers to flock here, too, now that the site has acquired Pogo.com, the second most popular site.

2 POGO.COM
[pogo.com]

Pogo caters to that huge segment of the online gaming world that's looking not to blast mutant aliens but simply to crank up a game of checkers or another of the old standards. Expert rooms and beginner's

A UNIT OF 40 FOOT KILLING MACHINES IS ONLY DWARFED BY THE MAN WHO COMMANDS IT.

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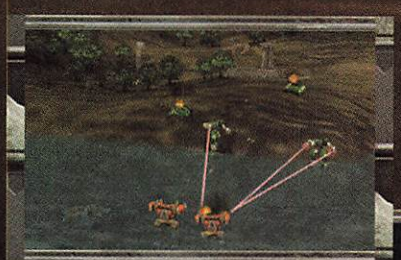

COMMANDER, YOUR MISSION IS SIMPLE: DISPATCH A COMPANY OF MECHWARRIORS INTO BATTLE TO DESTROY THE ENEMY. THEN SALVAGE THE REPAIRABLE 'MECHS AND USE THEM TO BOLSTER YOUR FUTURE ATTACKS. STAY FOCUSED ON YOUR STRATEGIC KNOWLEDGE AND TACTICAL SKILLS THAT GUARANTEE A VICTORIOUS CAMPAIGN. AND REMEMBER, IF YOU CAN SHIFT THE BALANCE OF POWER AND CHANGE HISTORY, THEN YOU WILL TRULY BE A GREAT COMMANDER.

MECHCOMMANDER 2

THE MECHWARRIOR® GAME OF TACTICAL COMMAND

microsoft.com/games/mechcommander2

TEEN T VIOLENCE
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Microsoft

GAMES

guides make this site a favorite with those searching for Bobby Fischer and those still searching for their rook.

3 FLIPSIDE
[flipside.com]

This site knows you're a sucker for computer solitaire, so it offers six varieties. It knows that you never pass up a crossword puzzle, so it serves them up online. It figures that you're terrified your boss knows all your weaknesses, too, so it puts a panic button on every screen (press it, and a document pops up).

4 IGN.COM
[ign.com]

IGN doesn't offer anything to play—just game news and reviews, which attract droves of hard-core gamers. You can find its logo on more than 135 partner sites devoted to niche games. You also can find links to IGN content at EBGames.com and other retailers.

5 UPROAR
[uproar.com]

The site gets a big boost from its corporate link to Flipside, but Uproar draws traffic on its own, with amusements such as online game shows. Play Family Feud without having to kiss Richard Dawson or Ray Combs.

6 MSN: ZONE.COM
[zone.com]

After gamers have been playing top-selling Microsoft titles such as Age of Empires solo for a while, they invariably want a little head-to-head action. Here's where they can find opponents for online play.

7 SANDBOX
[sandbox.com]

Something tells us it's not the casino games that pack them in here. Actually, a few things tell us that: the 50 free games, including fantasy sports; a membership that's 84 percent male; and partnerships with high-profile sports sites, including CNN: Sports Illustrated and Nascar.com. Six million Steinbrenners—that's scary.

8 FUNONE.COM
[funone.com]

Perhaps it's naive to think that FunOne's popularity is due to its renditions of old Atari games such as Asteroids. After all, most people find this site only after receiving a cheesy forwarded Fun Page. Still, we like to think that nostalgia brings folks back.

9 CHEAT CODE CENTRAL
[cheatcc.com]

Sure, you don't *cheat* at video games; you just enhance your gaming experience. Whatever, you do it a lot, with CCC edging into the Top 10.

10 BOXERJAM
[boxerjam.com]

Boxerjam follows a credo that worked for Tetris and Asteroids: A game needn't be fancy to woo players, just addictive. Surfers looking for extended work breaks will find multiplayer game show Strike a Match just what the doc ordered—if not the boss.

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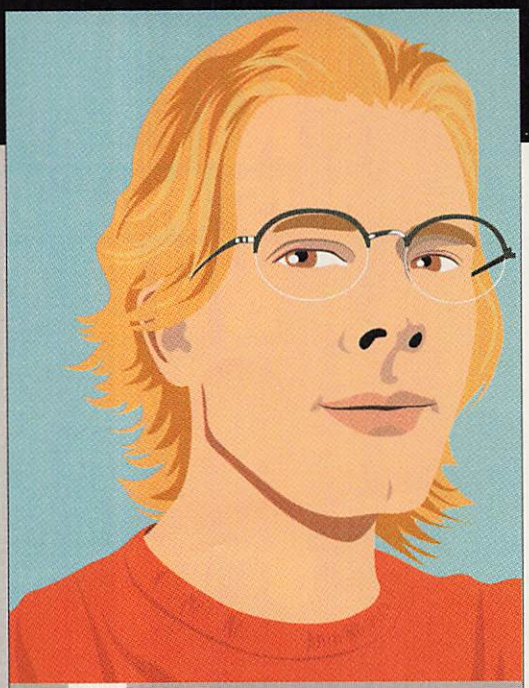
SOURCES OF STATISTICS: 1) AND 2) INTERACTIVE DIGITAL SOFTWARE ASSOCIATION; 3) SONY ONLINE ENTERTAINMENT; 4) ID SOFTWARE; 5) IDC RESEARCH



John Carmack

The creator of Quake and Doom says the most important game future developers can play may be...Google

"The concept of a virtual world was the thing that attracted me most to online gaming. From my early days, when I played Ultima and Wizardry, to the creation of today's modern three-dimensional realms, seeing virtual worlds grow more and more realistic has been rewarding.

When it comes to the Net's impact on gaming, the first thing that usually jumps to mind are the actual games being played online, such as Quake. But in the larger scheme of things, the formation of gaming communities is more important. There are lots of people that spend more time online talking about gaming than actually playing games online.

In five years, developers will be willing to sell games that absolutely require high-bandwidth connections. It won't bring a flood of new features that people haven't seen before, but it will make developers' lives easier and let us concentrate more on the fundamentals of gaming.

I think handheld wireless devices will lead to interesting new styles of gaming. Always being connected to the Net will lead to better multiplexing between the real world and the online worlds you play in.

Looking any further into the future is challenging. Coupling more bandwidth with ever-increasing processing power and greater penetration of video camera devices will probably lead to avatars that can accurately convey mappings of facial expressions and other body gestures.

Still, I am more excited by the conventional aspects of the Internet. Hardly a day goes by that I don't conduct at least a dozen Google searches on one thing or another. That is going to be the real long-term benefit of the Net. Some kids who aren't even out of high school know way, way more about programming and graphics than I did at their age, and that is made possible by resources on the Net. Ultimately, better developers will result."

YAHOO! INTERNET LIFE MAGAZINE

4TH ANNUAL YAHOO! INTERNET LIFE ONLINE MUSIC AWARDS

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WHAT IF THOSE E-MAIL PROMISES CAME TRUE

You know the sensation: Resisting that nagging voice called reason, you let curiosity get the better of your trigger finger. You click on the subject line, hoping that just this once, the e-mail marketer's promise of riches, fame, or (best of all) eternal sexual glory will finally be yours. What if it were?

Photographs by
Moshe Brakha

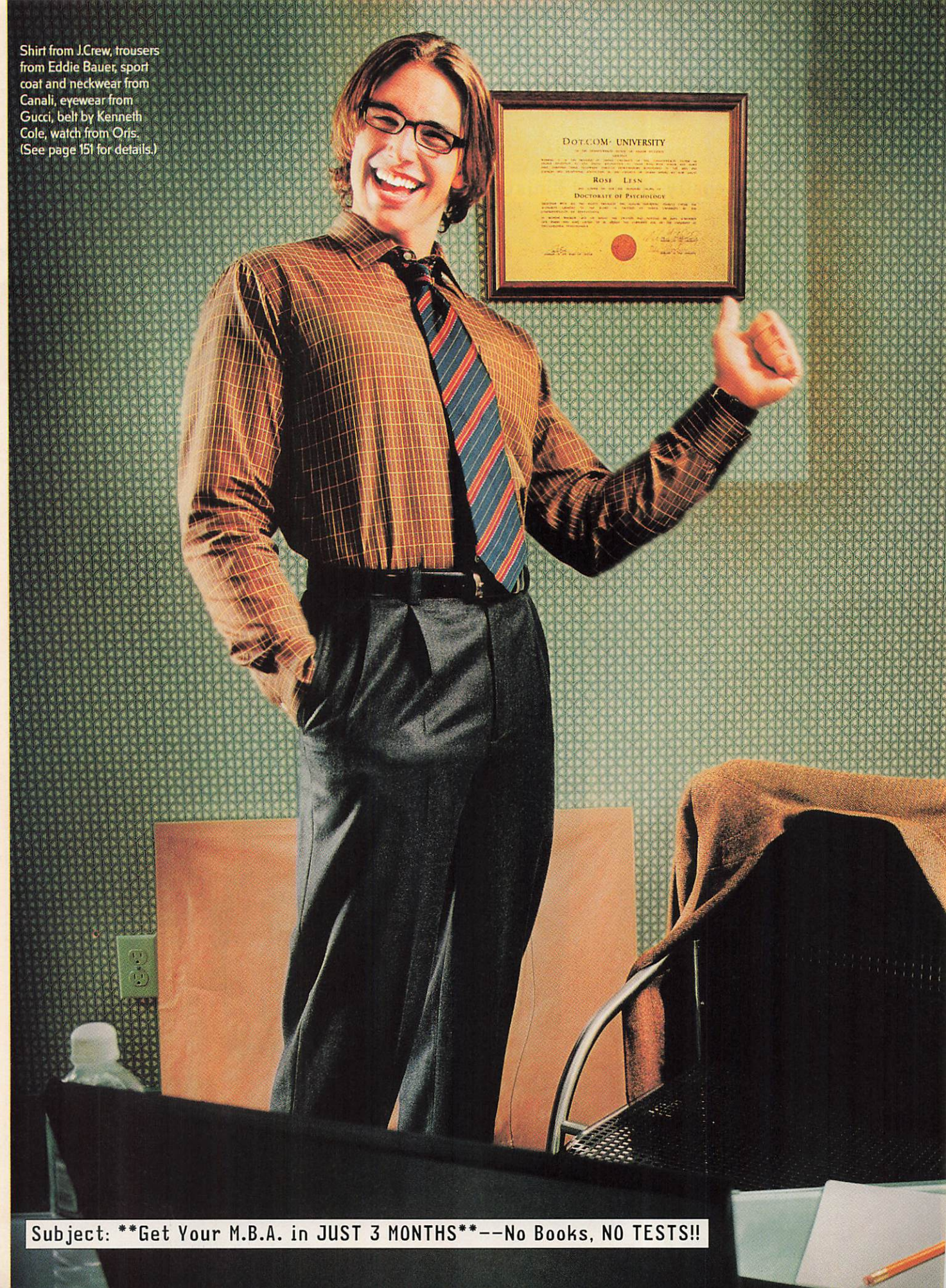
Style Director
Warren Christopher

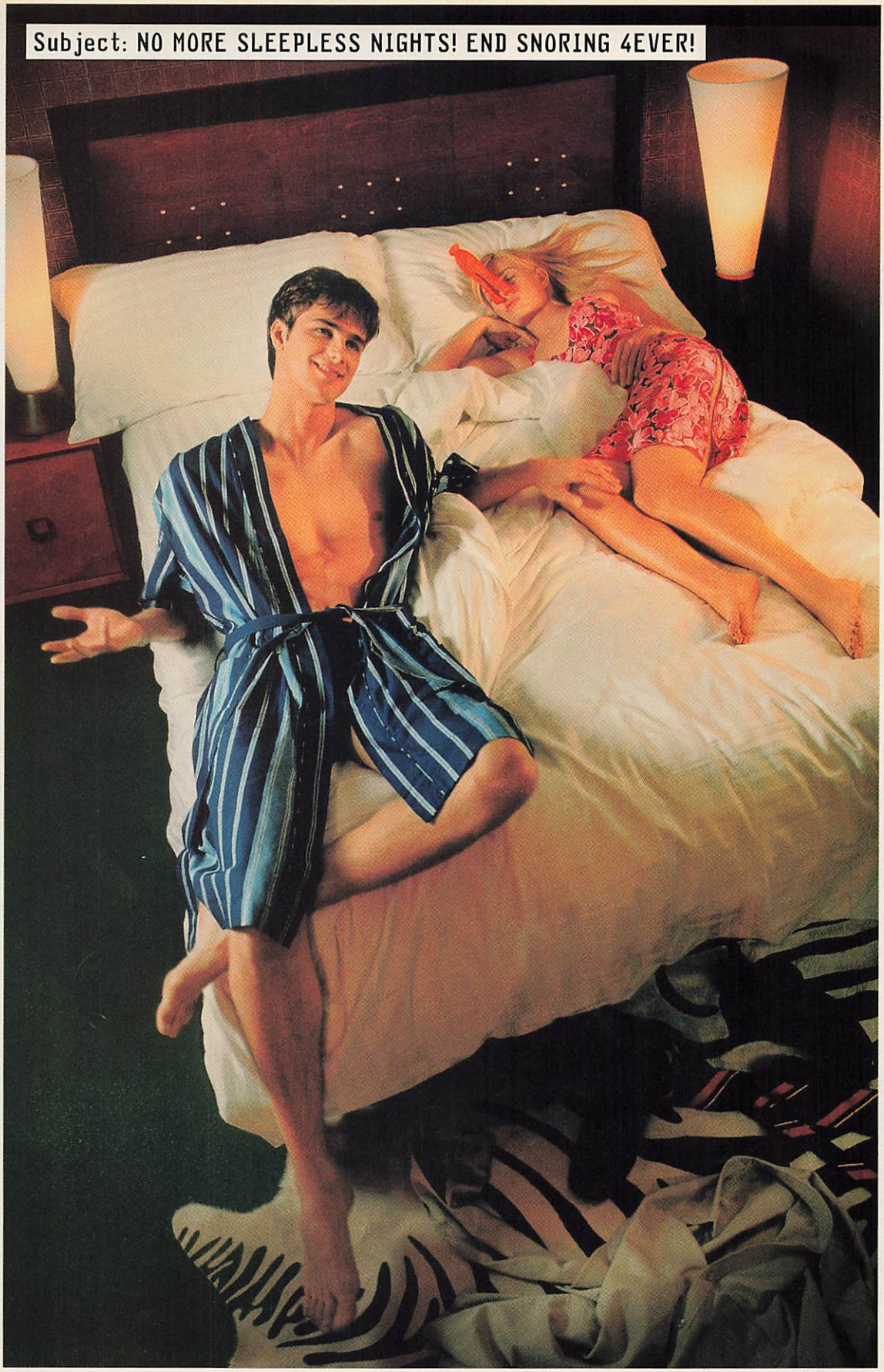
Fashion Stylist
Gus Romero
for Oliver Piro

Subject: Cut Debt in 1/2 and Retire!!!
SETS STYLIST: LINDA KEIL/OLIVER PIRO; MAKE-UP: RYUJI/BRADLEY CURRY; HAIR STYLIST: SUSANA PEOKS/BRADLEY CURRY
Suit and shirt from BOSS Hugo Boss, watch from Seiko, footwear by Kenneth Cole. (See page 151 for details.)

Left: suit and shirt from Canali, neckwear from Hickey-Freeman, footwear from Banana Republic. Right: overalls from Carhartt, T-shirts from Joe Boxer, boots from Timberland, hats from Triple 5 Soul. Foreground: briefcase from Hartmann. (See page 151 for details.)

On him: suit by DKNY, sweater from Nordstrom, footwear from Cole Haan. On her: blouse from Guess? Collection, skirt from Banana Republic, watch from Coach, footwear by Dolce & Gabbana. (See page 151 for details.)


Shirt from J.Crew, trousers from Eddie Bauer, sport coat and neckwear from Canali, eyewear from Gucci, belt by Kenneth Cole, watch from Oris. (See page 151 for details.)
DOTCOM UNIVERSITY
ROSE LESN
DOCTORATE OF PSYCHOLOGY
Subject: **Get Your M.B.A. in JUST 3 MONTHS**--No Books, NO TESTS!!



On him: robe by Tommy Hilfiger, boxers by Emporio Armani. On her: nightgown from GapBody. (See page 151 for details.)

On women: bodysuits and footwear by Dolce & Gabbana, leather skirts by Kenneth Cole. On him: tuxedo and shirt by Emporio Armani, neckwear by Giorgio Armani, vest from Robert Talbott, cuff links from Alfred Dunhill, watch from Coach, footwear from Johnston & Murphy. (See page 151 for details.)

Right: sweater from Nautica, leather trousers by DKNY Jeans, suede jacket from Claiborne Menswear, watch from Swiss Army, footwear from Cole Haan, eyewear from Gucci. Left: footwear from Rockport. (See page 151 for details.)

THIS WAS OUR Y-LIFE

In September 1996, Roger Ebert, Gene Siskel, and Camille Paglia joined us as we set out to make sense of cyberspace chaos. Since then, we've put forth the notion each month that the Net is essentially an ongoing party with some brilliant (or at the very least colorful) people in attendance—a 21st-century Algonquin Round Table, with a seat for everyone and no pesky bar tabs to duck. But for those forgetful skeptics out there, we've assembled this collection of quotes, excerpts, and images from our raucous first half-decade to remind them of just who's been showing up for the festivities, and what they've had to say. Add to those voices our own commentary on some watershed events, and you have a scrapbook that even Algonquin regulars Dorothy Parker or Robert Benchley would envy. Enjoy.

[96] 97 98 99 00

GENE SISKEL: I imagined the typical Web user to be, oh, a heavyset 54-year-old guy with glasses and silver hair. But I knew I had to get on [the Web]...so I wrote this roundup of movie sites.

ROGER EBERT: You can find out almost anything about the movies on the Web. Some of it will be true. Some of it will be pure invention.... FROM "SISKEL & EBERT ONLINE," **SEPTEMBER**

"Everybody's worried about what will happen to cyberspace now that the usual suspects have come in—Time Warner and those guys, that they'll take control and ruin it. But I think cyberspace is much more dangerous to Time Warner than Time Warner is to cyberspace." FROM A PROFILE OF JOHN PERRY BARLOW, IN **JULY/AUGUST**, THE LAST OF OUR TEST ISSUES

"You know, new technology is funny. We get amazed by whatever is the most recent thing....'You can read newspapers online! Wow, wait till they invent a way to deliver them to your door so you can read them on the subway!' So now it's, 'Hey, we can talk to each other over the computer! Now if only they could just invent a neighborhood bar where we could go have a conversation!'"

FROM: "A POLITICALLY INCORRECT CHAT WITH BILL MAHER," **JULY/AUGUST**

Y-LIFE: Is online sex considered cheating?

JOHN GRAY: Absolutely....Take it out of that realm and put it in the real world: Flirting is flirting. But online, it's more extreme. Rarely when you flirt with a woman, do you say, "Now I'm circling your nipples. They're getting so hard. I want to burst...." FROM A CONVERSATION WITH AUTHOR JOHN GRAY, **DECEMBER**

Q: What do most people talk about in chat areas?
A: Most chat discussions revolve around the fascinating topic of who is entering and leaving the chat area....Also, for a change of pace, every now and then the discussion is interrupted by a hormone-crazed 13-year-old boy wishing to talk dirty to women.
Q: What else can I do on the Internet?
A: You can join one of the thousands of forums wherein people, by posting messages, discuss and debate important scientific, philosophical, and political topics of the day.
Q: Like what?
A: Barry Manilow.
FROM *Y-LIFE'S* EXCLUSIVE EXCERPT OF *DAVE BARRY IN CYBERSPACE*, **OCTOBER**

FINALLY, A GOOD REASON TO GET YOUR MOTHER A COMPUTER. NOW SHE CAN TALK TO YOU AND THE KIDS FOR HOURS. FROM "LONG-DISTANCE SERVICE FOR THE PRICE OF LOCAL," ON WEB-BASED PHONE SERVICES, **MAY/JUNE**

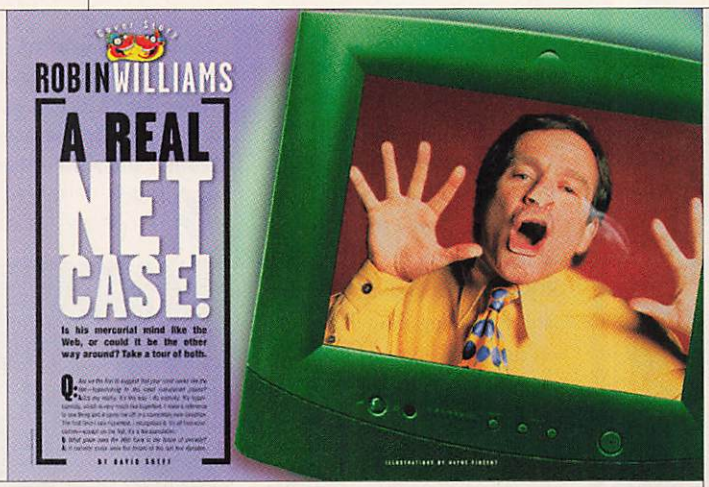
"The times—if they had ever been like that—when missionaries used the bush drums or smoke signals as the usual means of communication have gone," says Father Gerard Lagleder. "I surf extensively," he says. "Maybe it's the curiosity of a Web newbie or an early stage of WWW addiction." FROM "MONKS ONLINE," **SEPTEMBER**

MONKS: DANNY LEHMAN/CORBIS

THIS WAS OUR Y-LIFE

96 [97] 98 99 00

Y-LIFE: Are we the first to suggest that your mind works like the Net—hyperlinking to the most unexpected places?
ROBIN WILLIAMS: It's my reality. The first time I saw hypertext, I recognized it. It's all free association—except in the case of the Net, it's a *fee* association. You have to pay to get online.
FROM "ROBIN WILLIAMS: A REAL NET CASE," A *Y-LIFE* EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW, FEBRUARY



FOR SEVERAL YEARS, BECKY, AGE 18, HAD KNOWN SHE WAS SOMEHOW DIFFERENT—A DIFFERENCE SHE COULDN'T DISCUSS WITH HER FAMILY OR TEACHERS, GIVEN THE HOSTILITY THAT MIGHT GREET HER IN HER SMALL APPALACHIAN FOOTHILLS HOMETOWN. IN ANOTHER ERA, BECKY MIGHT HAVE BURIED HER FEELINGS IN A MISBEGOTTEN MARRIAGE, CONTEMPLATED SUICIDE, OR SIMPLY BOARDED THE BUS TO THE NEAREST BIG CITY. INSTEAD, SHE LOGGED ON TO THE INTERNET, AND STARTED TO DISCOVER HERSELF AT 9600 BAUD.
FROM "THE GAY CONNECTION," JUNE

At some point in the intrepid Internet traveler's itinerary, an excursion to the land of chat may seem necessary. Most of chat is a giant, hellish cocktail party where the vast majority of guests operate from their reptilian hindbrains. If you must enter, do so bearing either an Uzi or a big horkin' stick. FROM "A HEARTLESS WOMAN'S GUIDE TO GETTING SOME PEACE ON THE NET," **APRIL**

"ANYTHING GOES, BUT NOT WHEN YOU'RE DOING SOMETHING ILLEGAL. IT'S NOT THAT I WANT TO CENSOR ANYBODY. BUT IT'S UNFAIR THAT PEOPLE ARE EXPLOITING FOR THEIR OWN PROFIT PICTURES THAT THEY DON'T OWN." FROM "MARRIED WITH WEB SITE," A CONVERSATION WITH PAMELA ANDERSON LEE, OCTOBER

Our first Top of the Net issue also marked the first crowning of self-styled Net girl-next-door Cindy Margolis as the Most Downloaded Woman on the Net, spurring the constant query, "Cindy Who?" Four years later, everyone knows who. **JUNE**

OUR FIRST "AMERICA'S 100 MOST WIRED COLLEGES" REPORT PREDICTED A CAMPUS WITH "A PORT FOR EVERY PILLOW." **MAY**

About all I could write was, "Hi, my name is Bill and my 21-year-old son Michael was killed in a car crash on October 23, 1993. I feel like I have died inside." It took all of the courage I could muster to type those words and to click on the button that would launch them into cyberspace....This was the day that the miracle of healing began for me—a miraculous transformation. This journey, that started at the gates of hell, began to take me down a new path of spiritual healing. FROM "MOURNING BECOMES ELECTRIC," **JUNE**

Y-LIFE: If you were to exchange sexually explicit e-mails with a woman, would that be tantamount to in-the-flesh infidelity?
HOWARD STERN: I have a line I draw for all that. My wife, Alison, says that it's cheating and I say it isn't. I say, "Honey, it's just words. It's just play. It's research." FROM "HOWARD STERN HAS ONLINE PRIVATE PART-IES," **MAY**

CINDY MARGOLIS: STEVE SHAW/CORBIS OUTLINE

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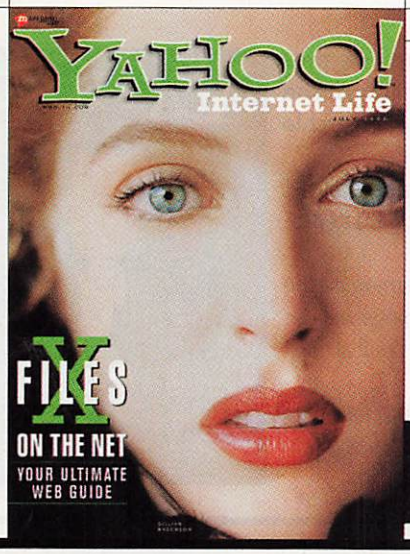
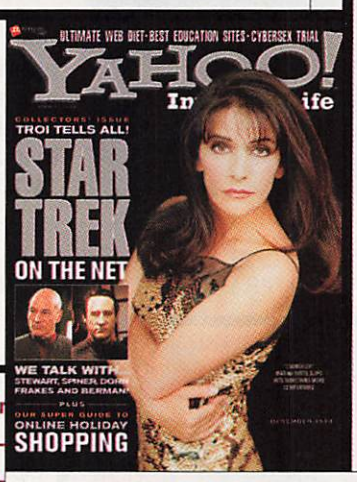


« How many times can you remember agents Scully or Mulder logging on to research cryptic data or flipping open a cell phone to warn each other of impending evil? The Net practically plays a supporting role in the show. And it makes good sense. It's the most powerful disseminator of conspiracy and counter-conspiracy theories out there. FROM "*Y-LIFE*'S *X-FILES* INTERNET FIELD HANDBOOK," **JULY**

AUGUST: OUR SURVEY OF MUSIC ON THE NET, AND THE ROLLOUT OF OUR FIRST ONLINE MUSIC AWARDS.

"[THE NET IS] A SAFER PLACE TO GO THAN BARS AND OTHER PLACES YOU COULD MEET SOMEONE—AND IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT YOU LOOK LIKE. THEN IF YOU TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL AND MEET, IT'S EITHER GOOD OR BAD, ISN'T IT? IT'S EITHER A DREAM COME TRUE OR YOUR WORST NIGHTMARE. IF IT'S MEG RYAN, IT'S NOT BAD, BUT THE PROBLEM IS THAT YOU DON'T KNOW." FROM TOM HANKS'S "SLEEPLESS IN CYBERSPACE," NOVEMBER

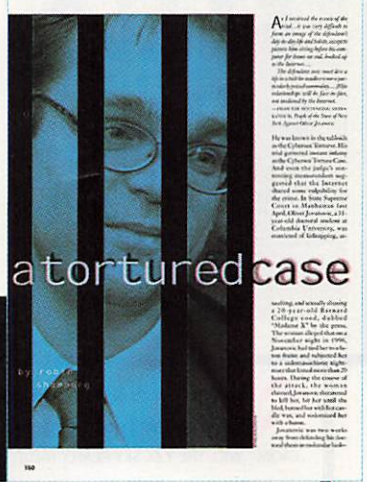
"I started in radio, and I see parallels in the Net. The chatrooms on the Net are like huge talk shows, accessible to everyone. Chatrooms amaze me. They are very addictive. I hate dull people. If a room is really dull, I stir things up. I see how many people I can shoo out by pure obnoxiousness. I go into Jewish Singles and adopt a fake identity and see how fast I can get everyone to flee. The room starts with 28 people: Within five minutes there are six. Soon they leave, too. I've cleared the chatroom! 'Who's that asshole?' Me." FROM "CITY CLICKER!" A CONVERSATION WITH BILLY CRYSTAL, **APRIL**



ON JANUARY 18, 1998, [MATT] DRUDGE WAS using his online tip sheet, the *Drudge Report*, to tweak Vice President Al Gore for campaign finance violations when he got wind of the fact that *Newsweek* had postponed [a Michael] Isikoff story with explosive allegations about President Clinton. That night, Drudge reported the allegations on his site. Within hours, his report was circulating in newsgroups such as **alt.current-events.clinton**, and **alt.politics**, not to mention Web chat boards across cyberspace. It soon became clear that the Internet was—at the very least—a featured player in this intern drama. FROM "INTERN-NET: THE TEST-MARKETING OF THE NEWS," **APRIL**

" It was assembly-line work. You sat down at your terminal, turned it on in the morning, and *wham!*—a main system started feeding you pages of people having sex. It searched for every dirty word it could find....This stuff began to sneak into my daily life. I'd be reading a book and suddenly realize that I was oblivious to what was happening in the story. That's because I hadn't really been reading the book. I had been scanning the last 50 pages of text looking for dirty words! FROM "CONFESSIONS OF A SMUT BLOCKER," NOVEMBER "

» MARINA SIRTIS: The Net is filled with nude pictures of me, but they're constructed out of pictures of my head and other women's bodies. I'm flattered by the bodies they have chosen—they're fabulous, but they're not mine. FROM "MÉNAGE À TROI," A CONVERSATION WITH *STAR TREK*'S MARINA SIRTIS, **DECEMBER**

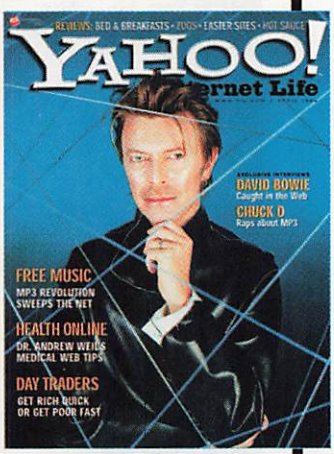


» What had appeared to be a near-textbook case of date rape and assault suddenly became a cautionary tale about the modern-day killing fields of cyberspace, a place where miscreants lurked in every chatroom and used search engines to hunt their prey. Even the case's S&M aspects—usually a guaranteed headline-grabber—were vastly underplayed in favor of the Net angle. FROM "A TORTURED CASE," A REPORT ON THE OLIVER JOVANOVIC "CYBERSEX" TRIAL, **DECEMBER**

THIS WAS OUR Y-LIFE

96 97 98 [99] 00

Y-LIFE: You've predicted that the future will be all about wearable computers.
DAVID BOWIE: I can't wait.
Y-LIFE: Are you going to preorder?
BOWIE: Can you imagine the terrible, nasty things we'll be asked to wear? We'll all look like Devo.
FROM "THIN WIRED DUKE," A *Y-LIFE* EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH DAVID BOWIE, **APRIL**



Just as World War II had radio, Vietnam television, and the Gulf War live cable news, Kosovo has the Internet. Indeed, it has been the first major armed international conflict between two sides with a significant presence online. FROM "WEB AT WAR," **JULY**

***Blair Witch*'s makers and fans appear to have beaten Hollywood's hype machine at its own game, at a fraction of the price; perhaps it's no wonder that a couple of detractors were referred to in *Salon* only as "executives."** FROM CLICK! NEWS, "WITCH'S BREW," **OCTOBER**

"IF THE INTERNET WAS AROUND IN 1975 THE KILLING FIELDS WOULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED." CAMBODIAN PHOTOJOURNALIST DITH PRAN, QUOTED IN "IN MEMORY OF THE MASSACRED," **APRIL**

I don't see how most of these companies will ever make an appreciable amount of money. I'm in the news business, so I don't own any stocks whatsoever. But if I did, I wouldn't have Internet stocks. I don't have the guts to own them. People with a lot more courage than I have are the ones buying them. FROM "NET TRADING SKEPTIC," A *Y-LIFE* EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH MICHAEL BLOOMBERG, **JULY**

The Internet was their terrorist tutor. In the past, how would people like these two kids get information about the wide world of other disaffected, angry people out there? Now, on the Internet, they were able to get terrorists to personally train them. RABBI ABRAHAM COOPER, OF THE SIMON WIESENTHAL CENTER, DISCUSSING THE COLUMBINE HIGH SCHOOL SHOOTING IN "NET MONITOR," A *Y-LIFE* INTERVIEW, AUGUST

Call me a rebel, but I am going on record to say that the world will not plunge from its axis in four months. FROM "WILL THE Y2K SKY REALLY FALL?," **AUGUST**

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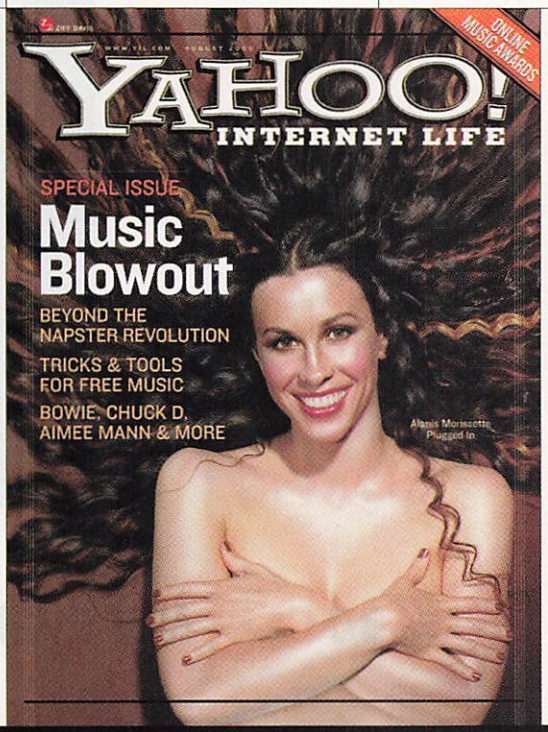
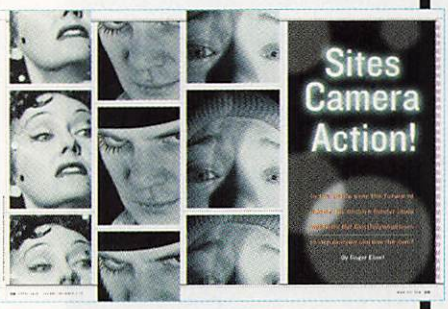


DID I *WANT* ALL 78 SONGS THE Police had recorded? I didn't even ask myself this question. The important thing was that *it was there,* and if I acted now, I could have it all. What, I thought, is happening to me? FROM "CONFESSIONS OF A NAPSTER FANATIC," **JULY**



"I HOPE THE STUDIOS DON'T LEARN ANYTHING FROM THE WEB. I HOPE THEY IGNORE THE MESSAGE, DO THE NOBLE THING, AND GO TO THEIR GRAVEYARDS AND DIE. THEY HAVE BEEN AN INCREASINGLY NEGATIVE INFLUENCE ON FILMMAKING IN THE PAST 20 YEARS." INDEPENDENT DIRECTOR BERNARD ROSE IN "THE NET WAVE," WHICH KICKED OFF OUR FIRST ONLINE FILM FESTIVAL ISSUE, **APRIL**

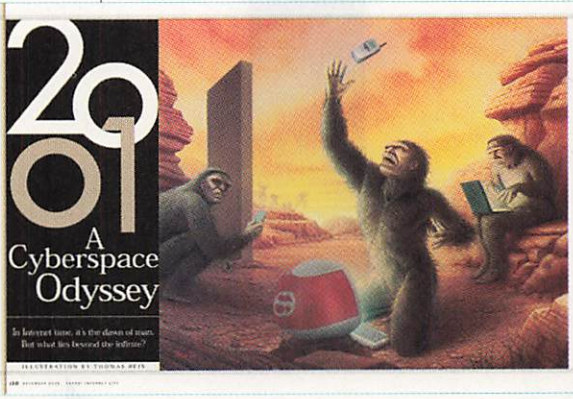
AL GORE: I never said I invented the Internet....For the record, what I said in answer to a reporter was, "I took the initiative in Congress,"—and then I went on to say—"in *creating* the Internet." What I meant was that, as far as Congress was concerned, I was the one who took the initiative. FROM "THE GEEK WHO WOULD BE PRESIDENT," A *Y-LIFE* EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH AL GORE, **NOVEMBER**

"I THINK WE MAKE TOO MUCH OF THIS CHAT MEDIUM. WHATEVER HAPPENED TO FACE-TO-FACE INSINCERITY?" DENNIS MILLER, IN "NET ICONOCLAST," A *Y-LIFE* EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW, **MARCH**

WITH ABOUT 17,000 HEALTH SITES IN EXISTENCE AT PRESENT, THERE IS MORE SCARY MEDICAL INFORMATION AVAILABLE THAN A SINGLE HUMAN COULD POSSIBLY CONSUME IN A LIFETIME. THIS IS NOT A GOOD THING FOR HYPOCHONDRIACS. ACTUALLY, IT'S A LOT LIKE HANDING OVER A LIFETIME SUPPLY OF HEROIN TO A JUNKIE. THE INTERNET IS THE GREAT ENABLER. FROM "UH-OH: A HYPOCHONDRIAC'S GUIDE TO THE INTERNET," **APRIL**

We all want to feel wanted. And we all want strange women to do strange things to us in motel rooms....Oops, did I say that? I must have been dreaming that I was the president. Wow. I'd like to see *his* in-box. FROM BEN STEIN'S "THE E-MAIL CHRONICLES: TO DEAR SIR WITH LOVE," **SEPTEMBER** It has taken less than 10 years for e-mail to degenerate from being the miracle that made the whole world an intimate club to being an annoying pain in the modem. FROM "THE E-MAIL CHRONICLES: THE WAY WE WERE," BY SUSAN CHEEVER, **SEPTEMBER**

"Of course, what we have far too much of right now is artificial stupidity—that's not original, but if you have a computer, you know all about artificial stupidity. *[Mimics HAL]* 'I'm sorry, Dave, I can't do that.' In fact, at one time, my computer had that line programmed in it." ARTHUR C. CLARKE IN "DISTANT PROPHET," A *Y-LIFE* EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW, **DECEMBER**



"I CAN'T IMAGINE WHY A MAN WHO WAS SO SMART AND SO RICH WAS SO STUPID." A JUROR QUOTED IN "JAILBAIT AND SWITCH," ON NET MOGUL PATRICK NAUGHTON'S TRIAL FOR SOLICITING SEX FROM A MINOR ONLINE, **APRIL**

BEST

12/90 CERN researchers Tim Berners-Lee and Robert Cailliau create a system that links related information on Internet-connected computers. Grasping for metaphors, they describe it as a "web."

2/93 Led by Marc Andreessen, a team of students from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign builds Mosaic, a program that puts a graphical face on the previously text-only Web.

12/94 Flash-forward: Andreessen releases Netscape 1.0, a better, faster, stronger browser that eclipses Mosaic. Surfers make the switch.

2/94 Stanford grad students David Filo and Jerry Yang cobble together an online list of a few dozen of their favorite Web sites. "Jerry's Guide to the World Wide Web" soon becomes better known as Yahoo!

4/95 Talk amongst yourselves. AOL, Prodigy, and CompuServe—the three largest online services—let users send and receive Internet mail.

8/95 Netscape goes public. Shares rocket from $28 to $190 within 90 days, setting off a four-year dot-com IPO frenzy that takes the Nasdaq past 5,000 before it cools off...way off.

1/96 President Clinton mentions the word *Internet* for the first time in a State of the Union address, announcing a plan to connect all of America's classrooms within four years.

5/96 Look at the ugly mug on that crook...and download it. The FBI nabs armed robber Leslie Rogge after pressure generated by its nascent Web site, the 10 Most Wanted Fugitives, leads him to surrender in Guatemala.

9/96 Napster is still three years away when online visionary David Bowie becomes the first major recording artist to release a single online.

12/96 Don't hang up! AOL switches from per-minute charges to all-you-can-surf subscriptions. Six million happy chatters stay online for hours, unexpectedly swamping AOL's dial-in lines. (See also "Worst Moments.")

5/97 Checkmate! Some 20,000 people in 120 countries go online to watch Garry Kasparov, considered by many to be the best chess player in history, lose to IBM's powerful supercomputer Deep Blue.

6/97 Netizens and the First Amendment win a major battle when the

→ 30 BEST NET EVENTS...

Supreme Court rules against the draconian Communications Decency Act. The decision confirms the Net is, in fact, a mass medium like TV and radio.

7/97 Attention, Earthlings! The Mars Pathfinder probe lands and sends back photos. Online viewers ogle them 47 million times in one day.

1/98 A 30-year-old computer novice named Matt Drudge breaks the Monica Lewinsky story online. Within days, the rumor-filled *Drudge Report* becomes must-read material.

11/98 President Clinton signs the Digital Millennium Copyright Act, updating outmoded laws for the Net Age.

11/98 AOL begins an acquisitive onslaught, gobbling up Netscape for $4.2 billion and positioning itself as a major media player. Industry watchers wonder what will come next.

2/99 Victoria's Secret scores a lace-trimmed touchdown when its online fashion show, which had been advertised during Super Bowl XXXIII, sends 1.5 million drooling sports fans scrambling for their computers.

2/99 No pens, no tellers. The Net's first full-service bank, the aptly named First Internet Bank of Indiana, sets up shop and begins accepting deposits.

5/99 Onetime Northeastern University student Shawn Fanning (nicknamed "Napster") puts the finishing touches on his little peer-to-peer file-sharing system and shows a few friends how they can use it to swap music files.

7/99 With a $140 million box-office gross, *The Blair Witch Project* proves that a well-executed Web site can generate more buzz than all the advertising strategies of a roomful of Armani-clad studio execs.

12/99 Sir Paul McCartney goes back to where he once belonged when his online concert, live from Liverpool's Cavern Club (capacity: 300), attracts 3 million people to MCY.com.

1/00 At 12:01 A.M. on January 1, someone successfully withdraws money from an ATM in New Zealand, and we know that after all the fear-mongering (and consulting fees), the Net has survived Y2K just fine.

1/00 If the Net is infinite, why does it feel so crowded? Because the number of Web pages has passed the billion mark, making search engines among the Net's most popular sites.

1/00 Paying more than $2 million per 30-second ad to show sock puppets and flying gerbils, 17

BEST

dot-coms, including Pets.com and Monster.com, account for a large chunk of ABC's $130 million Super Bowl XXXIV take.

1/00 New media trumps old as AOL merges with Time Warner to the tune of $160 billion. The International Federation of Journalists warns that the deal could threaten democracy and freedom of speech.

5/00 *Angry Kid*, a Claymation short released by AtomFilms (now called AtomShockwave), becomes the first Net-based movie to be nominated for an award at the Cannes Film Festival.

8/00 A coalition of instant-messaging providers, including AT&T, Microsoft, and Yahoo!, agrees on a standard to let users send IMs to one another regardless of the platform they're using. AOL doesn't cooperate.

11/00 As Brokaw, Jennings, and Rather botch election-night results, their underlings rush to Florida state government Web sites to get more accurate vote counts from precincts around the Sunshine State.

12/00 Online holiday shopping passes the $12 billion mark, or 164 percent of 1999's total of $7.3 billion, suggesting that despite countless dot-com disasters, the world is embracing Net shopping.

2/01 Napster cranks it up to 11, reaching its zenith as users download 2.79 billion files during the month. On an average day, a remarkable 1.57 million users manage to log on simultaneously.

WORST

9/88 College student Dave Rhodes allegedly sends the first "Make Money Fast" e-mail, claiming you can turn $5 into $50,000. Rhodes says the e-mails made him more than $400,000.

11/88 Twenty-three-year-old grad student Robert Morris releases a "worm virus" that crashes more than 6,000 computers on Arpanet and Milnet, government-owned predecessors to the Internet.

7/95 Fake research findings by Carnegie Mellon undergraduate Martin Rimm are picked up by *Time* magazine, which then runs a cover story on the ubiquity of pornography online. It later emerges that Rimm's statistics were fabricated.

12/96 Paramount tersely demands that *Star Trek* fan-site owners remove various elements of the show (especially pictures) from the Net within 10 days, or else. The fans, naturally, rebel.

1/97 Immediately after AOL migrates to its flat-rate monthly plan, the ensuing gridlock spurs 36 state attorneys general to demand cash refunds for unhappy members who can't get online.

3/97 Thirty-nine Heaven's Gate cult members commit mass suicide in a California mansion. The group conducted most of its membership recruiting on the Web, so the Net takes the rap for this tragedy.

12/97 When the Navy calls AOL to ask if a profile including the word *gay* belongs to Chief Petty Officer Tim McVeigh (not the Oklahoma City bomber), AOL promptly tells—without McVeigh's consent. This leads to his dismissal.

5/98 Users across the Web heroically unite—to help Howard Stern regular Hank the Angry Drunken Dwarf win *People* magazine's Most Beautiful People Poll online.

6/98 Following the first "live Internet birth," happy cybermom Elizabeth Ann Oliver is jailed for check fraud.

9/98 The Starr Report, containing titillating details of President Clinton's escapades, is released online.

8/99 Questionable celebrity vanity hits an all-time low when questionable celebrity Carnie Wilson Webcasts her own gastric bypass surgery.

10/99 The founders of the failed entertainment site DEN, which blew through $65 million in two years, are accused of sexual and financial crimes. The case is settled out of court.

4/00 Having peaked in early March, the tech-heavy Nasdaq collapses, dragging most of the so-called New Economy with it.

4/00 Fearing for their CD sales, Metallica and Dr. Dre sue Napster for copyright violation, bolstering a suit filed months earlier by the Recording Industry Association of America.

7/01 After losing $830 million, online grocer Webvan—one of the most heralded e-commerce sites of the dot-com era—closes its doors and lays off its 2,000 workers.

A

FAMOUS

BRIT

REVEALS

A BOLD

NEW LOOK.

FINEST GIN
IMPORTED
FROM ENGLAND
1820
BEEFEATER

17 PEOPLE (AND ONE SOCK PUPPET) WHO SHAPED THE NET

It's not easy being the arbiter of Net worth. But hey, it's what we do. So please excuse us if you weren't invited to our fifth anniversary bash. The event was thrown to celebrate the last five years of Internet history, and to fete 18 honorees whom we feel made a difference during that time—for better or worse. Our VIPs included a couple of billionaires, some tech wonks, and a sexpot or two, as well as a few individuals who met an ignominious Web fate. Call it our IT list. ■ On the pages that follow, you'll catch a glimpse of the party. We wish you'd been there. Really. But in truth, the gathering never came to pass. The layout is actually a digitally composed image by photographer Sanjay Kothari, who used celebrity body models, photos, and smoke and mirrors to make the happening happen. ■ Maybe next year.

NEXT PAGE, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT (HEADS ONLY): SHATNER: SIAN KENNEDY/RETNA; YANG: MIKE SEGAR/NEWSCOM; KING: MARK SHENLEY/CAMERA PRESS/RETNA; CASE: LOUIS PSIHOYOS/MATRIX; WHITMAN: RANDI LYNN BEACH/AP; GATES: MICHAEL O'NEILL/CORBIS OUTLINE; BERNERS-LEE: ANDREW BRUSSO/CORBIS OUTLINE; GORE: MICHAEL O'NEILL/CORBIS OUTLINE; MARGOLIS: MIREK TOWSKI/TIMEPIX; WARSHAVSKY: ANDY FREEBERG; ANDERSON: FRANK MICELOTTA/IMAGEDIRECT; DRUDGE: JAMES M. KELLY/GLOBE; ROSEN: LOU DEMATTEIS/NEWSCOM; FANNING: DAN LOH/AP; BEZOS: CHRIS CARROLL/CORBIS OUTLINE; MITNICK: COURTESY OF KEVIN MITNICK; BOWIE: ROBIN PLATZER/TWIN IMAGES/ONLINE USA, INC.; STYLING: LAURIE SCHECHTER; WARDROBE, ELECTRONICS, GLASSWARE, AND FURNITURE: DETAILS, PAGE 151.

The Shill William Shatner
The Priceline balladeer was the first celeb to demand stock options in lieu of payment for acting as a dot-com pitchman. Whoopi Goldberg and Alanis Morissette were among the other celebrities to hop on this gravy train before its ruinous derailment. Sorry, Cap'n, it's back to the Trek convention circuit for you.

The Trailblazer Jerry Yang
In 1994, while studying at Stanford, Yang and classmate David Filo began making sense of the Web by indexing their favorite sites. In doing so, they invented the first-ever Web directory, which they would nurture into the world's most powerful portal.

The Publisher Stephen King
New York's publishing world was horror-struck when King announced he would distribute his own serial book, *The Plant*, online. The much-ballyhooed venture was the first noteworthy chapter in e-publishing, even though King's effort withered on the vine after only six installments.

The Pusher Steve Case
By pushing his vision of an easy-to-use subscription service, and by then pushing those damn disks anywhere and everywhere, Case turned his company into a new-media behemoth (the first to conquer an old-media titan). Blame him for popularizing IM, the Flirt's Nook, and the teeth-gritting *You've Got Mail*.

The Road Kill
Pets.com Puppet
Pity the poor sock puppet. More than anyone or anything else, the wisecracking mascot epitomizes all that went wrong during the Internet gold rush. Who would have thought that mailing 50-pound bags of cat litter across the country on e-demand would turn out to be such a bad idea?

The Auctioneer
Meg Whitman
As eBay's president and CEO, Whitman turned a site that started as a place to trade Pez dispensers into an Internet megaphenomenon. Today eBay is among a handful of e-companies to turn a profit and the likeliest place you'll find a 15th-century wrought-iron boat anchor for sale.

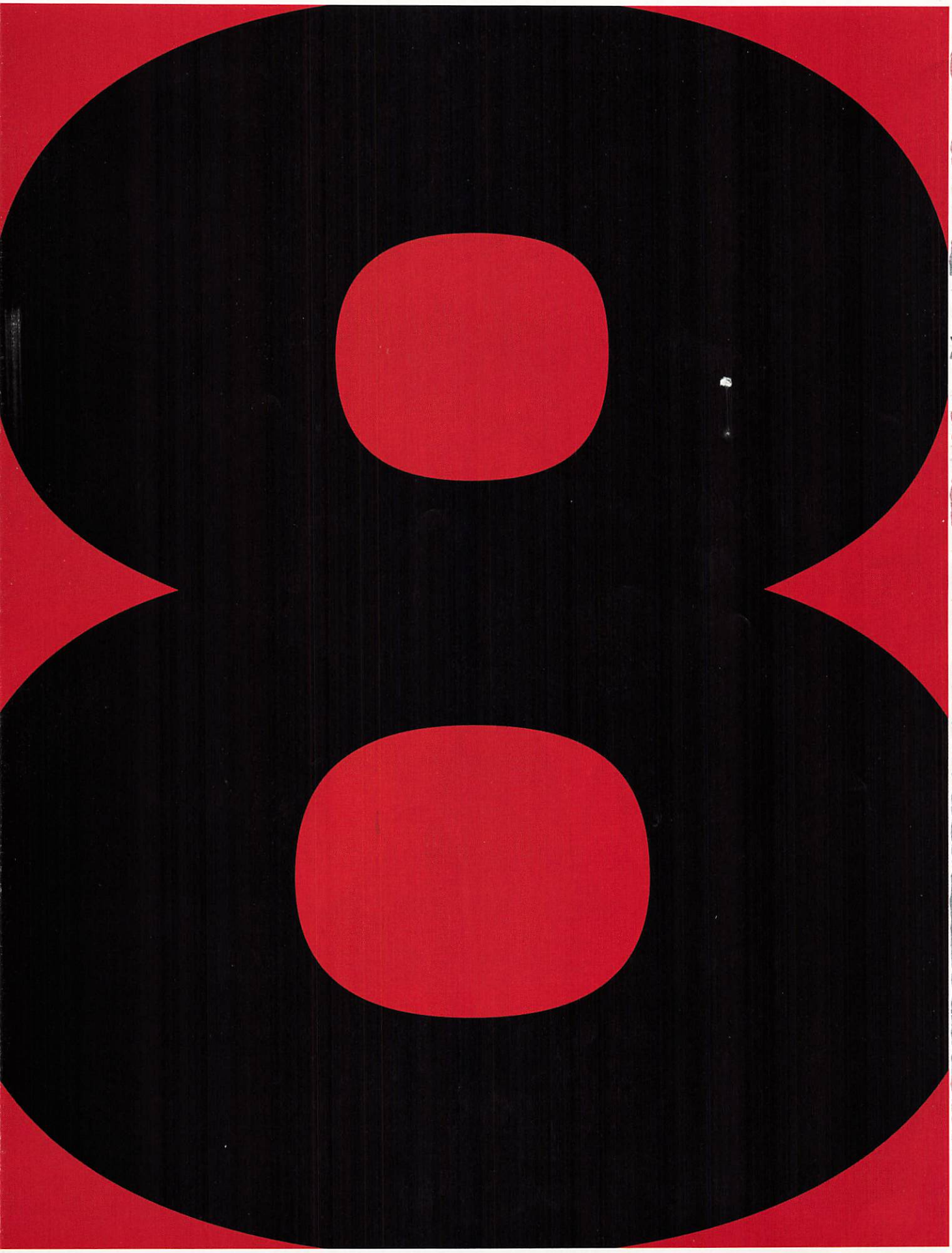
The Gatekeeper Bill Gates
He initially underestimated the importance of the Web, but in 1996 Gates caught Net fever. By bundling Internet Explorer into Windows 98, he was able to dominate the browser market (with 80 percent of it!). And with the danger of Microsoft's being split up all but past, he has good reason to boogie.

The Inventor Tim Berners-Lee
He's not a household name, but he should be. In 1989, Berners-Lee proposed a hypertext project that spawned a little something called the World Wide Web. More than anyone else, he's the reason we click, link, and surf.

The Politico Al Gore
He did not, in fact, create the Internet. But the former veep was decisive in spearheading legislation that helped give birth to the earliest version of the Internet, then called Arpanet. He also coined the phrase *information superhighway* and is, to date, the most tech savvy man to almost reach the presidency.

The Girl Next Door
Cindy Margolis
A star is born online. When *Y-Life* first named swimsuit pinup Margolis as the Web's most downloaded woman, she used a perky personality and PR savvy to parlay the title into an offline media career. Today the most-downloaded crown is too complex to measure, but Cindy endures.

2017 BEEFEATER GIN, 47% ALC./VOL. CALLED DOMECQ SPIRITS USA, WESTPORT, CT. MIX FREELY. DRINK RESPONSIBLY.



The Pornographer Seth Warshavsky
In 1999, he came to symbolize porn and sleaze on the Net with a brazenly entrepreneurial twist. Most dubious achievement: the online sale of the Pam Anderson and Tommy Lee sex video. *The Washington Post* reported last year that the Feds were investigating IEG, his company, for credit fraud.

The Babe Pam Anderson
Anderson was arguably as influential as Steve Case in enticing people to log on. The Web gave the actress a lot of exposure—perhaps too much. Anderson was unsuccessful in barring the online distribution of her homemade sex video, though some thought the lady did protest too much.

The Muckraker Matt Drudge
The Net's potential to disseminate info at lightning speed became front-page news when Drudge scooped all media and broke Monicagate. Although decried by many as journalistic trash, the *Drudge Report* was critical in making the Web a popular news medium.

The Enforcer Hilary Rosen
The CEO of the Recording Industry Association of America will forever be remembered, and perhaps reviled, as the person who took down Napster. Her aggressive litigation proved far more effective than most surfers would have liked. Looks as if we'll have to pay for those Abba hits after all.

The Buccaneer Shawn Fanning
At the age of 18, he coded one of the most influential Net apps ever; we put it up there with e-mail and IMs. His creation, Napster, turned the recording industry on its head. Even as it was brought low, Napster forever changed the way we think about content distribution and intellectual property.

The Purveyor Jeff Bezos
The king of e-commerce showed us how to build an Internet brand as well as sell books, patio furniture, and Rolaids online. Now if the former *Y-Life* (and later *Time* magazine) Man of the Year could only figure out how to turn a profit. Hint to Bezos: Lose the patio furniture.

The Hacker Kevin Mitnick
After breaking into computer systems at Motorola, Sun Microsystems, and Novell, Mitnick was prosecuted by the Feds and sent upriver for more than four years. News of his ninja-like exploits brought on a frenzy of media stories warning of the perils of giving info online and made him a hero in the hacker underground.

The Digital Artist David Bowie
This cyberspace oddity was among the first musical artists to embrace the Net. He not only interacts with fans online; he also distributes concert footage and new music over the Net. He even owns his own ISP, BowieNet. Better watch out, AOL.

The Mona Debbie.

Leonardo who? With the Fujifilm FinePix 6800Zoom you can create your own masterpieces. Its 3.3 megapixel Super CCD technology coupled with a new image processor delivers high definition color and incredible edge detail. And its cradle allows for easy upload with the press of a button. The 6800Zoom also gives you the freedom to capture 160 seconds of AVI video and up to 60 minutes of continuous audio recording. And since you can e-mail your creations all over the world, you won't have to wait until you're dead to become famous. www.fujifilm.com

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EIGHT NOTED WRITERS ON A DEFINING NET MOMENT

WHEN WAS YOUR MOMENT? DO YOU REMEMBER? HAS ANYONE EVER ASKED? Generations before ours witnessed the birth of their own media, recounted in stories of listening raptly to radio broadcasts from Ebbets Field, or of watching Uncle Miltie mugging on the Philco in the parlor. But we live in an altogether different age, one in which we've not only witnessed the birth of a medium but have also been invited to play an active role in its upbringing. It's this participation that enlivens every hour we spend online, whether we're after the patent practicality of 1-Click shopping or the potent absurdity of All Your Base.

In the pages that follow, eight of the most thoughtful writers of our time revisit their Net moment—the instant in which a two-dimensional medium became a truly great notion.

A CLASSICAL SEARCH MAKES THE MAN MODERN

By William F. Buckley Jr.

The great moment for everyone on whom the light of the Internet has shone has to have been reading on your screen what the other person said in reply to what you sent over, fingers trembling with excitement, just moments earlier. That was What-hath-God-wrought time, and I tore up the staircase to announce to my wife that the revolution had come. I was so deranged as to think to myself that Lenin was finally vindicated after having said in effect that he needed only electricity to give him the world! The Internet wasn't exactly the advent of electricity, but it is a child of electricity, and the afternoon when I completed my first round-trip in cyberspace, there was simply no doubting that I had the world by the tail.

That was my initial experience, and the years rolled by allowing me the conceit that I was among the discoverers of the computer world—not quite Thomas Edison or Bill Gates, but a prime apostle. There are 100,000 homes that have got hold of the new television mechanisms, such as TiVo and UltimateTV, that permit you to handle television as though an invisible librarian were working for you full-time, pulling out for you anything you wanted, mysteriously available. It is predicted that by 2006, 10.2 million homes will have such devices, but those who came in early will continue to feast on the kind of satisfaction I had from coming in on the Internet ahead of a few other people in my circle.

What then happened was that the whole world passed me by. I was now the 50-year-old skier, who took up the sport at 30, practicing my little turns diligently, even pridefully, only to notice one day that every human being aged three to 30 was gliding past me down the hill at 50 miles per hour doing entrechats and arabesques and, if their eyes happened to fall on me, no doubt wondering that an old cripple could still manage to get down the mountain.

That became the problem: to worry about all the things that the Internet holds out to you that you have not accumulated the knowledge to know about, let alone the skills to bring up. But never mind the fretfulness to which one is consigned on learning that there are green pastures out there that one will not likely ever harvest. The magical moments continue, even if encountered by sheer chance and even if they lead to frustration. Here is mine.

I wanted the keyboard music for a Bach concerto and discovered that I had to write to a store in London for it. I was astonished to get a bill for $40. (It is, after all, only about 16 pages.) How can that be, given that there are no royalties to pay? A year later it was a Scarlatti sonata. I wanted the music for K.208, which I had once had and had lost.

Why not try the Internet? A wild thought for me indeed.

How (for an amateur) to begin? Circling around the name Scarlatti, I came upon **The Classical Archives: Domenico Scarlatti [sunsite.univie.ac.at/classmidi/scarlatt.html]**. I scrolled down and was knocked over to find a screenful of K. citations, beginning with 001 and stretching down to 555. I moved the cursor to K.208 and, three seconds later, the music of that sublime piece of music came in over the speakers, a lovely rendition by John Sankey, who does the entire lot for you: all 555 of the Scarlatti sonatas.

But that was serendipity. It was the sheet music I was after, and that search presented one of those little Internet problems that can be conclusive if you don't have the patience and the resources to overcome them. How to get the sheet music for the A Major K.208 Sonata?

Well, there is a seductive come-on. On the site, a button reads, *Download selected free scores/sheet music.* You click on it, and...nothing happens. Right under it you find, *For sheet music: Get Adobe Acrobat Reader. Install to view them.*

I won't go on. In this case the instructions become technical beyond the capacity of those of us who write English and are therefore incompetent to understand non-English. For some cyberlanguage there is no adequate dictionary. I end up empty-handed. The London music store lives on.

But I know I would be a fool to complain about a medium that right now—right here! right this moment!—will play you any of the 555 Scarlatti sonatas! The Internet, for all its vexations, is heaven on earth, and the epiphanies are waiting for you, every day.

WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR. IS THE FOUNDER OF *NATIONAL REVIEW*. HIS NEWEST NOVEL IS *ELVIS IN THE MORNING*.

TIMES FIVE

By Zadie Smith

Because the truth of it is, the medium doesn't transform your world, not entirely. We do much of the same things, but we do them, yeah, faster, yeah, simultaneously, yeah, in a different space. But there isn't one epiphanic moment—at least, there wasn't for me. So here are the highlights.

The time that was the first time. It was October 1994. I was 18. I was sitting in an underground college bunker named after the man who started the whole shebang, *really* started it: Alan Turing. I was having trouble double-spacing paragraphs on a Word document. My computer experience to date had been limited to a 1989 Amstrad and a Canon StarWriter—the former, a game console; the latter, a typewriter with aspirations. So, I'm sitting underground, struggling with my document. It is very late at night. I share the dark room with people I would not acknowledge in daylight. Nerds to the right, to the left. And they hate me, too, with my recreational drug use and my ethnic trousers and my inability to paginate. Time passes. Soon it will be 2 A.M. I have the feeling these guys are waiting me out—they want to see me come and beg for their help. Finally, humbled, I approach a tall, thin boy who is wearing a fedora and has no friends. A clever man, no doubt, but an anemic one, with sallow skin and a strong smell. I ask him if he can help me. He is overjoyed. He leaves the game he is playing (he's stalking someone around a medieval castle full of slowly revolving 3-D hallways) and comes to my PC and leans over me. In a second he has solved my problem. Ten minutes later he's changed the font, realigned the paragraphs, inserted page numbers, explained footnotes, and spell-checked the whole thing. I am almost weeping with gratitude. He has thrown off his usual crippling shyness. He's cracking jokes. *He's* patronizing *me.* And then he says, "Have you activated your electronic mail account yet?" To me this sounds like "Have you considered the possibility of human bipolar molecular transportation?"

For half an hour, he is infinitely patient. Here is the in-box with its black and white flashing bars, with its *x*'s and *y*'s, with a folder to save your letters and a folder to throw them away. He keeps saying, "Imagine it's just like your real desktop, your real office," smiling at me, at the moron, who has to be spoon-fed the interface through imprecise, childish analogy, needing something solid and familiar to rest upon, like a crutch.

So. In Turing's room that night I got a brief presentiment of what was to come. Blessed are the people you thought were losers, for they inherited the earth while you were busy admiring your own muscle definition and queuing for the new Prince album.

The time I saw naked people. Like everybody, as soon as I was familiarized with the Internet, I searched round, seeing if I could find some naked people on it. And I could. And back then they didn't want your money. Not really. They just wanted you to be impressed with them and the ingenious way in which they used this spanking new medium to increase the quantity of naked people it is possible to see in the world. Boy, did they succeed. For me, the first time was a mixture of *Well, this is simple and quick and disease-free and cheering* and, on the other hand, *There might be nothing more lonely and more degrading to the spirit than this.* Ah, the Web! There isn't a thing in this world it can't give to you, quick and flat and shiny and in full Technicolor. Except love, maybe.

The time I found out I was not hot. Every culture dreams up its oracle of Delphi. You ask a question, you get the hard truth. Along with whydoihavetodie.com and isthereagod.com and howdoesonedogoodinthisworld.com, whether we like it or not, amihotornot.com is a pretty fundamental question. To cut short a long and, frankly, upsetting story: I am not. Hot. I am a 3.7. Yes. And 10,976 people said so.

The time I "met someone over the Internet." I met someone over the Internet, once. And he was not a loon or a loser or a freak or a maniac. He was an angel. And we had a romance that would have been impossible even 10 years before. He saw me in a bar, he wrote about me in a Web piece. I found it (yeah, ego-surfing; I've stopped now), I mailed him. He mailed me back. I mailed him back (that carried on for a while). Then he messaged me, and I messaged him. Then we switched on the voice thing, and typed half a sentence, spoke the rest of it. About a month later, I put my face in a scanner and sent it to him. He took a picture of himself with a digital camera and sent it back. I scanned my hands, my arms, my chest, and close-ups of my freckles. He played songs on guitars and recorded them and put them at secret addresses on the Web, and I went and listened to them, and hummed along like he was in the room. We met, often, in different cities. For nine months we had one hell of an affair. And then, when it ended, the bad news went both ways via retracted e-mails, returned scans, voice-enabler disabled, Messenger made invisible. I'm here but you don't know I'm here. Same sadness as ever; different medium.

The time it really depressed the hell out of me. Losing e-mails. Either make the in-boxes bigger or...*something.* Because what we've got at the moment is a generation's correspondence going down the virtual toilet once every six months whether they like it or not. Nothing for the archives, nothing for their kids; no saved love letters, no histories, no memoirs. I lost 80 percent of my in-box in a stupid blunder—my own fault—and I don't know that I have ever gotten over it. In fact, there's your epiphany. When I lost my mails, the old Luddite in me thought, *Well, this newfangled Internet business is as permanent as the word and as ephemeral as the word.* By which I mean, consider this fact: Of novels published in the 19th century, probably 98 percent are now out of print. By which I mean, you can have an explosion in the availability of the word, but the medium, by itself, is not enough. There has to be the will to preserve, too. And the determination to create good "content," above and beyond the ease of the medium (penny dreadfuls, as the cheap Victorian novels were called, got their name for

a reason). Sooner or later the *way* the words travel to you ceases to thrill (think of the phone!). And all you're left with is what they mean.

ZADIE SMITH'S CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED FIRST NOVEL, *WHITE TEETH*, IS CURRENTLY BEING MADE INTO A MINISERIES BY THE BBC.

INFINITE LOOP

By Timothy Ferris

Years ago, when Net surfing meant typing Unix commands at a % prompt, I foresaw the online revolution. Given a graphic interface, I realized, the Internet would change the world.

That was unfortunate—for two reasons. First, my crystal ball made me no money: It's one thing to predict the petroleum revolution, quite another to realize that the man to back is an obscure, tight-lipped accountant named John D. Rockefeller. Second, I neglected to publish my speculations (I've never been able to find a literary voice suitable for futurism) and thus missed out on the booby prize of at least becoming an Internet guru, with a little think tank, maybe, and a clutch of acolytes in eyeglasses.

Thanks to my useless prescience, I was surprised neither when e-mail became ubiquitous nor when library catalogs, books, scientific journals, and the paintings in art museums went online. I'd seen all that coming. There was plenty I hadn't expected—spam, porn, Pets.com—but in general I viewed the Internet boom with an intimate yet bereft bemusement. I felt like the cop who had married and been divorced from Marilyn Monroe while she was still a nobody.

The main thing I failed to foresee was the Web's eerie efficiency. I hadn't appreciated the extent to which it would function, not as a passive tool (if there is such a thing), but as an active, living organism that climbs into your life and takes up residence there.

The first inkling of this came a few years ago, when I was writing captions for a book of Hubble Space Telescope photographs. On my desk was a foot-tall stack of Hubble press releases, sorted by date, in which to check specific information about each image. But it didn't take long to realize that finding the answers on the Web—even with a 4,800-baud modem!—was faster than pulling them out of the papers that lay within arm's reach.

It's often more efficient to find something on the Web than in the books in my own library. Since I wrote some of those books, the process can get spooky. A few weeks ago I was searching the Internet for a suitable map of the Milky Way galaxy. After discarding several, I found one that looked just right. The credit line said it came from a book called *Galaxies*. The trouble is that I wrote *Galaxies*, and had designed the map. This wasn't research; it was academic onanism.

The other day I was fact-checking the manuscript of my new book, *Seeing in the Dark*, and arrived at a sentence beginning with the words, "When the great comet of 1680 was moving like a ghost ship across the night sky, the theologian Christopher Ness warned that it was 'a Sign from Heaven [that] signifies Drought, and portends War.'" Wanting to verify the citation for the quote and the spelling of Ness's name, I typed *great comet 1680 Christopher Ness* into a search engine and hit Return. The first item to appear read, "...the great comet of 1680, moving like a ghost ship across the night sky."

I stared at it in nauseating confusion. Had I become some sort of inadvertent Internet plagiarist? No, what had happened was that in 1997 I'd published a piece in *The New Yorker* as a warm-up for the book, and it included the Ness quotation and my own "ghost ship" phrase. Somebody posted the article on a Web site, and now the Net had flung it back in my face. The weird thing is that the sentence in question had been edited out of the article before it was published. Evidently I was reading a bootleg of my own copy.

Long ago, I wrote notes for a fiction piece about a future in which previously inanimate objects have all acquired a degree of digital intelligence: Your house gossips with your neighbors' houses, your television watches what it wants, your doorknob talks back to you like a character in Disney's *Alice in Wonderland*. Now some of that is coming true, although in different ways. My computer talks to other computers, unbidden, for reasons it doesn't bother to tell me about. The television set records programs I've never heard of, of its own volition. And as I write this, the flock of wild parrots that lives here on San Francisco's Telegraph Hill is cavorting in the tree outside my window, antic as a red-and-green-garbed motorcycle gang. Among them I can spot, I think, friendly Kristine and her mate, Sam. How do I know their names? Because they have their own Web site, **The Wild Parrots of San Francisco's Telegraph Hill [www.wildparrots.com]**.

Lying awake at night I ask myself: What now am I failing to foresee?

TIMOTHY FERRIS IS THE AUTHOR OF *LIFE BEYOND EARTH, COMING OF AGE IN THE MILKY WAY*, AND *THE WHOLE SHEBANG* AND IS A CONTRIBUTOR TO *THE NEW YORKER*. HE HAS BEEN NOMINATED FOR A PULITZER PRIZE AND A NATIONAL BOOK AWARD.

FAITH IN COMPLEXITY

By Ha Jin

Despite being a regular Internet user, I've often had misgivings about the medium's reliability and credibility. On the Net anyone can give his or her two cents' worth, and there is as much noise as there are voices. At least I used to think that way. Besides, once I started browsing, I couldn't stop for hours on end. Often I felt I had wasted time.

Words on my computer screen looked suspicious to me because they appeared without a clearly identified source and disappeared without a trace. On the Net, I realized, many people wrote under pen names—as if they all were trying to hide their faces. As a result, I rarely viewed the Internet as a reliable source.

That all changed recently. Last April, the EP-3 spy plane accident was headline news in both the U.S. and China. The American media presented the Chinese pilot Wang Wei, who was killed in the collision, as a mere hot-dog pilot. He appeared on TV like a clown, smiling foolishly and standing with his upper body above the opened canopy of an F-8 interceptor. The Chinese media, however, depicted him much differently. He became a national hero, who had been not only an ace pilot but also a considerate husband, an erudite man, an accomplished artist, a good chef, a skilled tailor, a singer, a computer wiz, and no doubt an expert in the fine art of ikebana (flower arranging).

On American TV a senator smirked and essentially said about him, "Well, if you want to perform those stunts, you've got to have the skills. Otherwise you put others' lives in danger and get yourself killed." By contrast, the Chinese government, in addition to issuing Wang high honors, named him Guardian of Territorial Airspace and Waters. A song, "Brave Eagle," was officially composed in his memory. His bedridden wife was shipped to Beijing so that the national leaders could visit her in the limelight. Schools in the capital offered to take care of his baby son's education before college. His hometown was making a towering marble statue of him. The whole thing had gone so out of proportion that people joked in private that Wang Wei must have been saved the minute he ejected, but the government had hidden him away so as to create a big hero.

This discrepancy in the American and Chinese media puzzled me, as I sensed that this guy's life must have been distorted. People often talk about cultural conflicts and clashes that cause misunderstandings, but I don't buy any of that. There are facts and truths beyond cultural interpretations and justifications. They are not clear simply because some people have concealed them from us. What is the truth in this case, then? A series of Web sites, in English as well as Chinese, pointed me toward the facts. Wang Wei and his fellow pilots had been pressured into a tragic situation: They were ordered to stop the American spy planes without firing at them. This kind of tragic dimension in an individual's death was completely absent from the news reports most of us were exposed to. But I found it on the Web, a medium often mistrusted, yet here, a place where multiple voices offered the truth in all of its complexity.

Some articles on the Net purposely highlighted the holes in the official reports. Some convincingly analyzed the psychology of the authorities. Some, using the same evidence given by the media, offered an entirely original interpretation. Some revealed facts that had been suppressed and neglected.

The discovery amazed me, as if suddenly I had found access to a roomful of classified files. This experience changed my feeling about the Internet. I was impressed by the honest, relentless voices on the Web working to unravel the official stories. The Net is indeed indispensable if we look for truth. Its power lies in its ability to shatter authorities' manipulation of information. For this alone I will go on browsing.

HA JIN IS THE AUTHOR OF *OCEAN OF WORLDS, IN THE POND,* AND *WAITING,* WHICH WON THE NATIONAL BOOK AWARD AND THE PEN/FAULKNER AWARD.

A BIDDER IN PLATO'S CAVE

By Russell Banks

When it came to the Internet, I was for years a troglodyte, which is defined by *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* as "a member of a fabulous or prehistoric race of people that lived in caves, dens, or holes." To me, a computer was a fancy typewriter, and the Internet was a way to mail letters called e-mail quickly and cheaply. Beyond that I didn't want to know. I'm a novelist and screenwriter and had become comfortable over the years with software such as WordPerfect and Final Draft, but only so long as it came to me on a floppy disk that I could punch

manually into my computer. The idea of downloading software directly from the Internet with the click of a mouse seemed too close to Ben Franklin's experiment with the kite and key—I might get struck by lightning. My wife, long an Internet adept, calls it the blue flash syndrome.

That was little over a year ago, and much has changed. Nowadays I think of myself as a "recovering troglodyte." The "real" and electronic worlds have merged and become one for me. It's as if I've taken up residence in Plato's cave.

How did the concrete, physical, hands-on world of such objects as printed manuscripts, brick-and-mortar libraries, CD-ROMs, and floppy disks become one with something as utterly abstract as electronic bits of information moving practically at the speed of light through my telephone line onto my computer screen? It happened, as they say, one night.

After an extra glass or two of wine at dinner, I logged on to AOL to check my e-mail. No mail that evening. Bored and mildly disappointed, I clicked a banner ad for eBay. I remembered that a friend had been buying and selling antique furniture on eBay for several years and had made in that time twice her husband's salary, which, when I thought about it, was a little like winning at blackjack in Vegas, which is to say, *cool.*

I clicked onto one of the categories of goods whose value I could reasonably determine. I don't know much about antique armoires, but as an American boy of the 1950s, I do know old cars, and in minutes I was checking out Lincolns of the 1970s. Then, before I could stop myself, I was bidding on a silver and black '79 Lincoln Versailles. It seemed to be in perfect condition. Located in Athens, Georgia, it had no rust, new tires, rolled and pleated silver-gray leather upholstery, a trunk large enough to stash three bodies, and an ashtray that could hold half-a-dozen cigar butts. I decided that, if necessary, the Lincoln could be resold in upstate New York (mainly because of the absence of rust on it) for between $4,000 and $4,500. I bid $3,900. As it happened, I had poked my way into the auction a mere two hours before it was scheduled to close, and by night's end I owned, or had "won," as eBay insists, a 1979 Lincoln Versailles sitting in a garage in Athens, Georgia, 1,100 miles from my garage in Keene, New York. My wife had gone to bed, but I knew her first question would be, "So how're you going to get it home, smart guy?"

This was a problem for the Internet. I went clicking for companies that transport cars and within minutes had located an outfit in Gainesville, Florida, that specialized in transporting vehicles. For another $300, I was able to have my Lincoln delivered to my door; when it rolled off the truck and the engine roared to life, then settled into a chuckling rumble, I knew that my life had changed. The car is what we used to call "cherry," and when I drive it to town for the paper or over to Lake Placid to the movies, I feel like Tony Soprano. Within weeks, I had eBayed my way to an antique Rolex watch for $1,100, which, after having it appraised, I insured for three times as much. I bought a Bianchi racing bike in perfect condition, the complete, 22-volume, 2000 edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary,* still in sealed cartons, for half the retail cost, the numbered Riverside edition of the complete Hawthorne, and a first edition of *The Scarlet Letter.*

All right, I've collected early editions of Hawthorne for years, and I know dictionaries; also, I'm a longtime student and rider of French and Italian road bikes, I'd recently read an excellent piece on antique Rolexes in *The New Yorker,* and I've been checking out 1970s American luxury cars for years. So it wasn't all luck. Still, my initiating ramp onto the Internet was the ramp to the mall, as it were, specifically the eBay mall, where the thrills of shopping and gambling meet. And since I didn't get burnt there—no blue flash, and I made money—I was willing and even eager to move on to the next ramp, and the next, and the next, leading eventually to my present wholehearted embrace of the Net, where, as in Plato's cave, metaphysical differences between the abstract and the concrete dissolve, and the ideal world becomes real.

RUSSELL BANKS IS A NOVELIST AND SCREENWRITER. HIS MOST RECENT BOOKS ARE *CLOUDSPLITTER* AND *THE ANGEL ON THE ROOF.*

THE ELECTRIC RUSH

By Pico Iyer

Every time I use e-mail, I wonder and wonder again about the instant, rushing closeness it encourages and even creates. More intimate than a phone call, more urgent than a letter (and much more uncensored, and unnuanced), e-mail has exploded some friendships I've cherished for years and propelled me dangerously close to people I've never met. Suddenly—overnight, it seems, or quicker—strangers are under my skin and inside my soul, whispering things to me they'd never say in person, and getting my own strange whispers back.

I first noticed how e-mail was creating a new kind of relationship after I'd been using it for four years. About 10 years

ago, I wrote a piece half-defending a young male novelist whose books people found offensive, even obscene—by placing him next to a young female novelist who seemed to me, in her subtle and emotional way, no less violent. Men aren't the only aggressors in life, I'd meant to suggest; they're just the crudest and loudest kind.

In May of last year, quite by chance, I found myself participating in a reading in New York, and there, by my side, was the woman, unmet, whom I'd used as a straw man (or woman) in my argument of nine years before. She looked at me nervously, I smiled back at her, not entirely sincerely, we talked around the only thing we wished to talk about. I mentioned a common friend, she asked something unrelated, we chatted about the weather and the room. Whenever I came closer to her, whenever I drew away, I could feel her watching me; the problem, I think, was that she seemed an intriguing presence to me (and I, perhaps, not quite the sadist she'd imagined).

Three days later we found ourselves sharing a stage again, and this time, just before we went out to face the audience, she told me, more than a little anxiously, that she planned to read a piece that mentioned my attack on her. She did so—as I'm sure I would have done in the same position—and then returned to her seat beside me. I said something truthful and peacemaking, she murmured some general kindness about what I'd just read, we looked at each other, looked away.

The very next day I flew back to Japan and the rural suburb where I live, and almost as soon as I got home, I received a message attached to a handle I'd never seen before (and including the odd word *thing*). Inside was a long, unparagraphed, naked outpouring from the woman I'd once attacked—part apology, part explanation, part offering of peace. I wrote back instantly, without a thought (as e-mail teaches me to do), and she wrote back with an equally heedless speed. I answered, she answered, impatience was in the air. Suddenly, after nine years of saying nothing, we were breathing down each other's necks.

Flung-out, unrehearsed, almost visceral, the messages flew back and forth across the Pacific as if between intimates with a long history of trust. On the phone, I realized, I'd have been reduced to stammers; in a letter I'd have waited for the diplomatic moment; even a fax machine would have slowed us down. But online we were pushed, pushed, pushed into a close, dark chamber where nothing existed but her words, mine, and hers again.

Then, as suddenly as it had begun, the conversation stopped, seemingly forever. Before I assumed my online identity, I'd never typed a letter in my life; I'd always gone into a private place, thought of the person I was addressing, and then scribbled off hieroglyphics that even I, as often as not, couldn't read. And growing up in England, I'd been taught to keep things at a safe distance, and say what I felt by saying nothing. But e-mail has no time for distance, and the cyberworld is about the elimination of all borders and restraints. Moments and moods pour through me and I become a different self—more metallic, more brittle, my Luddite self assures me—as soon as I'm on-screen; my friends receive messages from someone they've never seen and may not even like.

I thought about all the things the woman and I hadn't said in person; I thought about the furious closeness that had come out online, and I wondered: Is there something to be said for limits?

PICO IYER, THE WORLD-RENOWNED TRAVEL WRITER, IS THE AUTHOR OF *VIDEO NIGHT IN KATHMANDU, THE GLOBAL SOUL, THE LADY AND THE MONK,* AND *CUBA AND THE NIGHT.*

PAPA'S PRIMER

By Sue Miller

I'm a fiction writer. Because a student in a writing class I was teaching at M.I.T. once told me that research indicated that writing on a computer *changes* certain aspects of a person's style, I still write my first drafts in longhand, in bound notebooks, as I always have. The transition to the computer, even just for revision, was seismic for me—something I came to only reluctantly. Even now I print out each version of whatever I'm working on and do my revisions in pen or pencil first: scratchy question marks and comments in the margins as I edit myself, underlines under passages that need cutting or expansion, and then, drifting down the margin and often over to the back of the sheet, new passages in longhand, new bits of dialogue, new—always better, I hope—chunks of description.

Messy. Time-consuming. Old-fashioned. I concede everything. But I still benefit enormously from the computer as I type in all these changes. How easy it is now! Inserting anything, anywhere—a breeze. Moving whole chapters or sections thereof, simple. But I don't need to convince you.

Still, long after I'd convinced myself of the computer's usefulness, I continued to resist the notion of the Internet. *No way!* I thought. Not for me, purist of some sort that I am.

Then one day I was discussing out-of-print books with a friend

who'd found at an online bookstore something she'd long been yearning to own. And I thought at once of my father. He had died several years earlier, of Alzheimer's disease. (It was because I was writing about him that I was doing online research on that illness.) My father was a church historian, and he'd written a number of books on that topic over the course of his life. I owned several of them, given to me by him years before, but I didn't have his first one, written when he was a young professor and published the year I was born. And I had assumed the possibility of owning this book was lost to me forever. Even as I typed in its title at the online bookstore, I still assumed that, really.

But there was his name! Not lost, not gone, remembered even in this new technological world: *James Hastings Nichols.* And there were his books—all of them. Though they were all, of course, out of print, with what was called "limited availability." *Indeed,* I thought, still skeptical; but I entered my request anyway.

There was a kind of promise made in response. Essentially they would try to find the book I wanted; at best it might take some weeks.

It took much longer than that. It took long enough so that I mostly forgot about it, except for the occasional odd speculation when I was thinking of my father: *Wonder if I'll ever get that book of his I ordered.*

And then one beautiful summer day in Vermont I walked down my dusty driveway to the metal mailbox on the road. Standing in the shade of the birch trees, I opened its flap and pulled out, along with a few letters, the flat package in cardboard that had come to mean "book" to me. As I walked slowly back to the house, trailed by my dogs, the rest of the mail tucked under my arm, I pulled the tab that split the cardboard wrapper.

And there it was. Slim. Its cover dark green. *Primer for Protestants,* by James Hastings Nichols. I stopped in the driveway and opened it.

It was the first edition, published in my birth year. Clearly it had belonged to someone like my father—someone who read passionately, editorially. Someone who wrote in his books with pencil. Here a sentence on the yellowing pages was underlined. Here there was a question mark, an exclamation mark in the margin. Here the reader had made a pondering note to himself that trailed down the side of the page.

I felt that I had been connected to my father again—through his printed words, through the old, well-worn book itself, even through the notations this other reader or writer had made in it. I felt that this circuitous, ephemeral, oddly modern route, the Internet—which had until this moment seemed so remote and disconnected from my own life—had affirmed something permanent and enduring for me; and standing there under the cloudless blue sky of a Vermont afternoon, my heart lifted in gratitude for it.

SUE MILLER IS THE AUTHOR OF MANY NOVELS, INCLUDING *INVENTING THE ABBOTTS, WHILE I WAS GONE, FOR LOVE, THE GOOD MOTHER,* AND *FAMILY PICTURES.* HER FORTHCOMING BOOK IS *THE WORLD BELOW.*

THANK YOU FOR SURFING

By Christopher Buckley

How many Republicans does it take to change a lightbulb?

Three—one to change it, two to reminisce about how good the old one was.

As a conservative, I firmly believe that anything new is bad, or possibly even evil. Unless it will lower my cholesterol without my having to exercise, get me from New York to L.A. faster, or record an entire season of *The Sopranos.*

I scoffed at the fax machine. I gave it a year—tops. Then I bought one. I pronounced cell phones a fad. I darkly murmured my assent to the rumor that they caused brain tumors. Now I become hysterical if my Ericsson T28 takes longer than 45 seconds to find a local network in Barcelona. I do, however, still denounce the use of cell phones by women driving two-ton SUVs.

The arrival of the Net presented an ontological challenge of a higher order. At first I saw clearly that it was a gimmick, quite likely evil, and would lead to the end of civilization. When I learned that Charles Manson had his own Web site, I said, "See?"

Patient people sat me down and showed me what else it could do. I leaned forward in my chair. "Hmm," I said. "Hmm." I was soon a willing, if guilty, captive of this cyber Satan. At least as a conservative I was able to comfort myself with the knowledge that the Net was invented by the Department of Defense, as a means of linking together scientists who spent their days thinking about how to blow up the Russkies before they could blow us up. As a (very bad) Catholic, I was hugely cheered to find an essay by my hero Tom Wolfe about the Jesuit priest Pierre Teilhard de Chardin stating that were Chardin still alive today he would probably consider the Net, this miraculous thing that links together every human being on the planet in the greatest convergence in history, a manifestation of God's master plan "to turn all the world...into a single sublime Holy Spirit." *What* a relief.

The moments we have had together, the Net and I! To be sure, they divide into two distinct categories: Naughty and Otherwise. Needless to say, I firmly disapprove of the naughty uses of the Net. I'm shocked—*shocked!*—to find Pamela Anderson streaming video and the Anna Nicole Smith House of Worship on my screen. However did they get there? Then there was that evening some years ago when just before setting off for a dinner party, I checked a site I had just discovered **Continued on page 151**

CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY IS EDITOR OF *FORBES FYI* MAGAZINE, A REGULAR CONTRIBUTOR TO *THE NEW YORKER,* AND THE AUTHOR OF *THANK YOU FOR SMOKING* AND THE FORTHCOMING NOVEL *TRIAL OF THE MILLENNIUM.*

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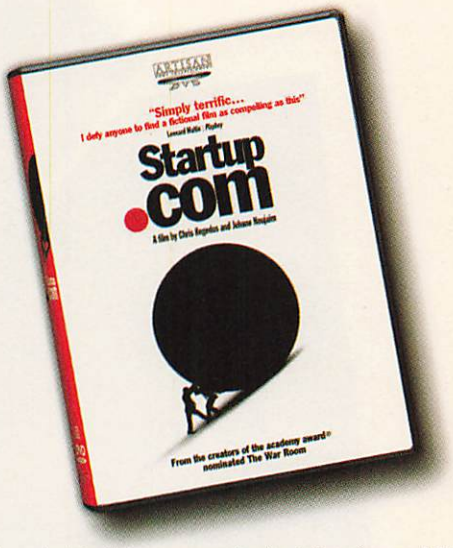

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Continued on page 149

ROBOT: CSA PLASTOCK

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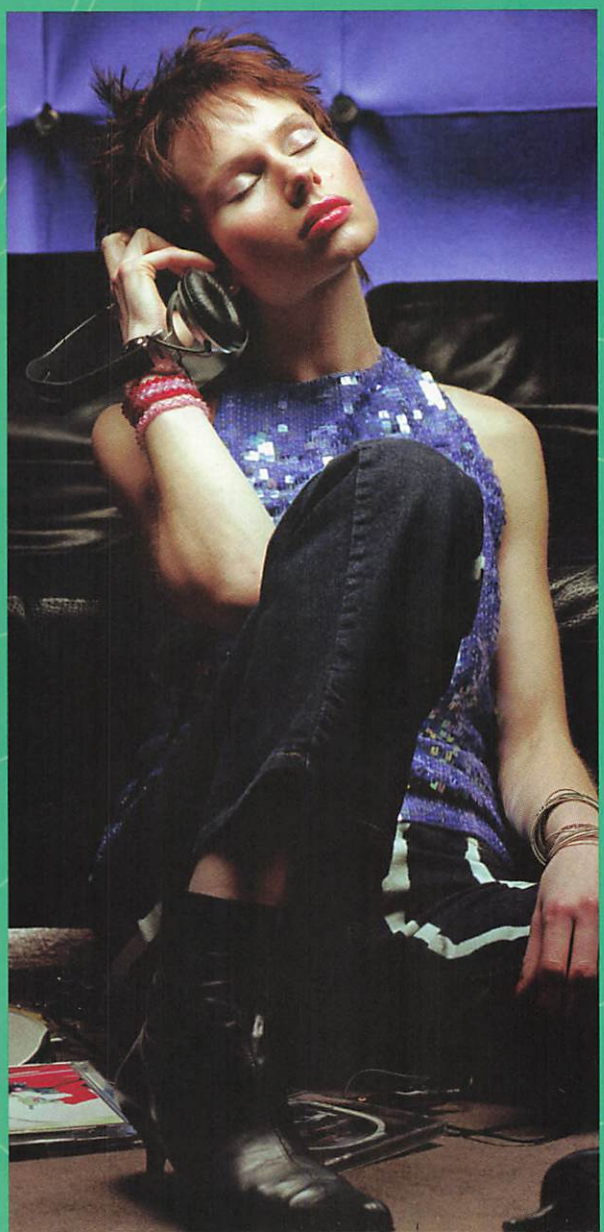
During the past quarter century, consumer electronics have profoundly changed our lives. The very fact that you're reading this magazine—that this publication exists—is a direct result of an electronics revolution.

The changes brought by this revolution are all around us—in the way we get our entertainment, the way we work, the way we stay connected to our work and family, and the way we record special events in our lives. As we begin a new millennium, the world is on the cusp of a whole new age, as digital and wireless technology make electronic products smaller, mobile, more powerful, and easier to use.

With all the advances in the past 20 years, we've just scratched the surface of the information age. There is much work to be done to realize fully the potential of this new digital age. We'll need standards for new formats of recordable media. We'll need decisions on legislative and regulatory issues. We'll need rules that balance consumers' fair use of new technology products with content providers' and copyright holders' rights to be fairly compensated for the use of their work. The Consumer Electronics Association and its member companies will be at the forefront of these developments.

By Jim Barry



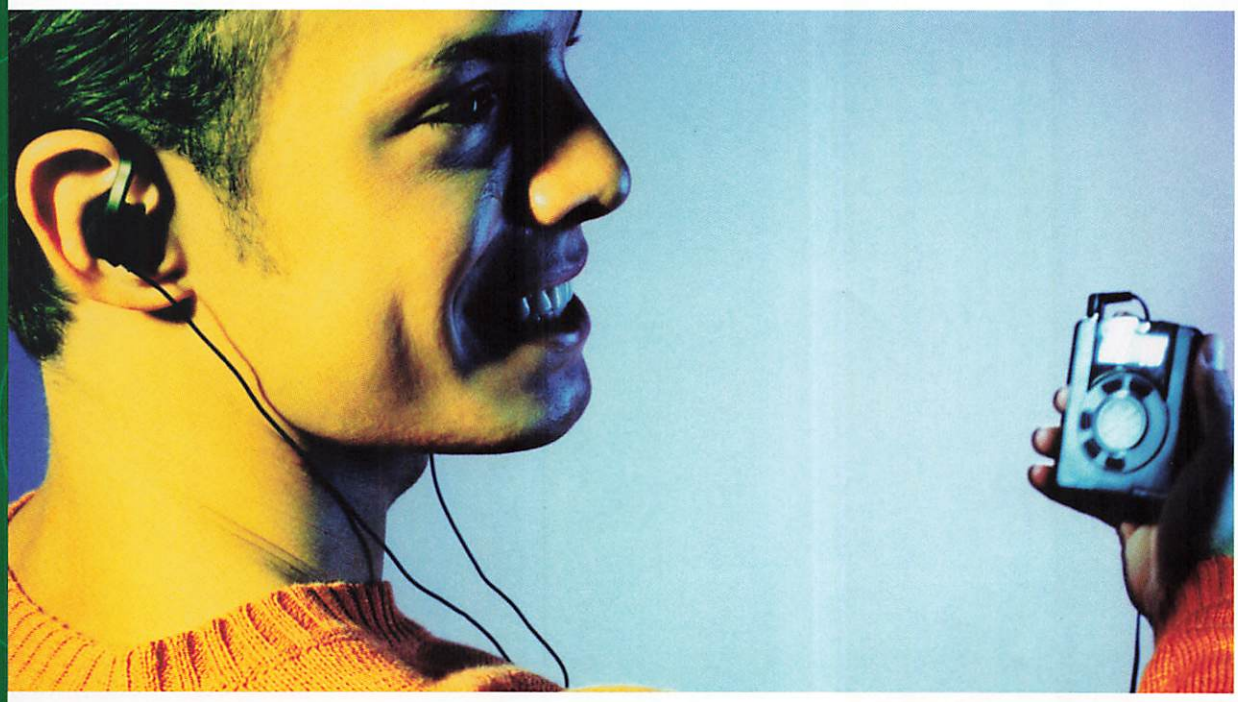
INTERNET MUSIC EVERYWHERE

IF YOU HAVEN'T JOINED THE DIGITAL MUSIC REVOLUTION YET, NOW'S THE TIME TO DIVE ON IN! WHETHER YOU CHOOSE TO WEAR IT, PLAY IT AT HOME OR ON THE ROAD, OR CARRY IT, THERE'S NO LIMIT TO WHERE YOU CAN GET YOUR MP3.

Internet music–it's not just for your PC anymore. Just a short time ago, digital music was confined to either your PC, or a portable, walkman-like device. Now, there's a slew of new players on the market that let you capture and listen to digital music just about anywhere, be it in your car, in your living room, attached to your cell phone, or hanging around your neck. In fact, according to eBrain Market Research, last year, portable audio devices showed the highest growth rate of any type of audio system, with revenues climbing 16 percent over the previous year. Market research firm International Data Corp. predicts that U.S. shipments of compressed audio players will reach 18 million in 2005 (and that's from 2.8 million last year). So what's all the hype about? Read on!

WEAR IT

Why make just a musical statement when you can make a fashion statement too? That just may be the thinking behind a whole new category of music-to-go devices—wearable MP3 players. Consumer electronics giant Panasonic has made quite the bold statement in this burgeoning market with its new e-wear SD Audio Player devices. These ultra-hip devices come in two different flavors: the SV-SD75 Audio Player, which is



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INTERNET MUSIC EVERYWHERE

about the size of a matchbook and half an inch thick; and the SV-SD05 Audio Player Headset, which, as its name suggests, is an MP3 player that's totally integrated into a set of headphones. Both sell for about $400.

The SV-SD75 boasts a slick, high-tech design, housed in goldtone metal with blue accents. It has a 2-line, 12-character LCD on the front that displays silver characters on a blue background, so it's easy to read. This LCD can show song title, artist name, and play list name, so you'll know at a glance what you're grooving to. The SV-SD75 also has play/stop, skip/search, EQ, play mode, and volume up/down keys; as well as a hold/mode/normal dial; so working your way through your playlist is easy. Panasonic includes a raft of accessories with this player, like clip-on headphones with an extension cord, a rechargeable battery with charger, and a USB reader/writer for song transfers to and from your PC. You also get a neck strap and an arm band with a multipurpose clip, so you really can wear this device however you want. And since it weighs less than two ounces (without battery), you'll hardly know you've got it on in the first place.

If you hate dangling wires, you'll love Panasonic's SV-SD05, an MP3 player that's totally integrated into a set of headphones. There's nothing at all to carry: just clamp them on your head, and you're ready to rock and roll—literally. To control your music, you can use the play/stop and skip/search keys on one side of the headset; and the power, volume, and EQ keys on the other side. This headset even folds up for easy transport or storage (carrying case included) when you're not using it. Like its strap-on brother, the SV-SD05 has an LCD screen; this one is smaller, so it shows the track number and the playlist number only.

Both Panasonic e-wear devices have a lot of features in common. They have a built-in MP3 decoder, so they can play MP3 files without transcoding; and they have AAC (Advanced Audio Coding) decoders as well. The e-wear products also both have XBS (Extra Bass System), and random play and repeat play features. But perhaps the most cutting-edge technology that you'll find in these gadgets is a new type of storage called Secure Digital. SD storage cards are tiny, postage-stamp-sized devices that are secure (as their name implies), so copy-protected music can be distributed safely.

The popularity of Internet music has brought some unlikely players into the game as well. Sports outfitter Nike offers the $299 psa[play120 ("psa" for portable sport audio), a MP3 and WMA player that's been specifically designed for sport. This device is tiny and oval-shaped, so it's comfortable and unobtrusive, whether you put it in your pocket or strap it on with the optional armband or belt. This version can play 120 minutes of digital music; a 60-minute version is available for $199. Nike even sells short sport tops, mesh tees, and shorts for women that are specifically designed for use with psa[play devices. Samsung also has a new wearable player called the Mini Yepp. Priced at just $99, this player comes bundled with full-length audio tracks from Blues Traveler and Samantha Mumba, among others.

If you're a true technogeek, check out the WMP-1V Audio Wrist Watch from Casio ($250). As the name implies, it's a fully functioning watch with alarm, stopwatch, hourly time signal, and calendar features. But this watch also has an MP3 player built in. Using the 32MB MultiMediaCard (nonreplaceable), you can listen to up to 66 minutes of music (or 33 minutes on the high-quality setting) via headphones, which plug into the left side of the watch.

PLAY IT AT HOME

Internet music also is making its way into your home, but with some devices, you don't even need a PC to get your MP3. One such product is the $1,200

AudioReQuest ARQ1-30

AudioReQuest ARQ1-30 from ReQuest Multimedia, which is a home stereo component, so it will fit into your home entertainment system. This device is a combination CD player, MP3 and WMA player, and jukebox that can store up to 525 hours of digital music from the Internet, or encoded music from your favorite CD, LP, cassette, MiniDisc, or even 8-track via stereo analog line input. S-Video and composite video-out jacks allow you to hook the device to your TV set, so you can edit playlists.

The AudioReQuest also has parallel and USB connectors for easy song transfer to and from your PC or portable MP3 player; as well as an Ethernet port, so you can connect it to your home network. You can even transfer images or digital photos from your PC and display them on a connected television for a true multimedia experience. This product is a fabulous example of the device conversion that you will increasingly see across all types of consumer electronics product categories in the future.

AudioRamp iRAD-S

Another such device is the $599 AudioRamp iRAD-S, the first shelf-top "Internet stereo." There are many audio mini-systems on the market, but none quite like this one. It combines traditional stereo features like a CD player and AM/FM radio with the ability to play Internet radio stations in either WMA or MP3 streaming format. The device comes preloaded with hundreds of Internet radio stations in different formats, so it's ready to go right out of the box. To connect the iRAD to the Internet, you can use either a 56K modem line, Ethernet, or HomePNA—all are supported.

To add or update station information, you can use the personalized MyAudioRamp Web site, which dynamically retrieves the content that you want on a daily basis. The system also has a hard drive inside, so you can store over 1,000 songs at a time, or record music from CDs directly to the drive. The iRAD-S uses what AudioRamp calls IntelligentAudio technology, which allows you to interact with content while you listen. Using the ActionButton, you can request news headlines, buy CDs, or even order concert tickets. You can also use it to take a "digital fingerprint" of a song you're listening to on the radio—just push the button during the song, and IntelligentAudio will tell you the artist's name, song title, and label; store that information; and gather further related information from different Web sites. It's features like these that take the listening experience to an entirely new level.

Even traditional "PC" companies are getting into this game, realizing that digital music has become an integral part of the computing experience. Both Dell and Gateway have been selling what can loosely be called digital jukebox appliances since last year; both can connect to a home network in order to pipe digital music from your PC to any location in the house. Gateway's product is called the Connected Music Player, and sells for $299 (HomePNA and Ethernet ready); Dell's is the Digital Audio Receiver, which costs $149 for the unit alone, or $199 in various bundles that let you connect it to a network via Ethernet or HPNA. And, by the time you read this, Compaq's new iPAQ Music Center will be available, which goes one better than Dell and Gateway by adding the ability to listen to Internet radio stations to its device.

PLAY IT ON THE ROAD

Considering the amount of time that we all spend in our cars these days, it's not at all surprising that MP3s have made their way into automobile stereo decks as well. One such system is the Rio Car ($1,199 with 12GB hard disk; 3,000-song capacity), from Sonicblue, maker of some of the most popular MP3 devices on the market. The Rio Car is a portable

INTERNET MUSIC EVERYWHERE

system that fits into your car's dash, but it's designed to be removable, so you can take it out and hook it up to your PC to load up on tunes (via serial, USB, or Ethernet connection), or you can take it with you for safety reasons once you reach your destination.

Kenwood eXcelon Z828

This player uses notebook PC-sized hard drives to store music, so it's available in a variety of configurations, up to 60GB. Two drives are supported, so you can start out with one, and upgrade later if you wish. The Rio Car also puts quite a different twist on the usual car stereo user interface. The device uses a vacuum fluorescent display, which provides higher contrast and better viewing angles, day or night, than traditional LCD panels. The Rio Car comes with a blue display; amber, red, and green displays are available as user-installable upgrades. An FM tuner module should be available by the time you read this.

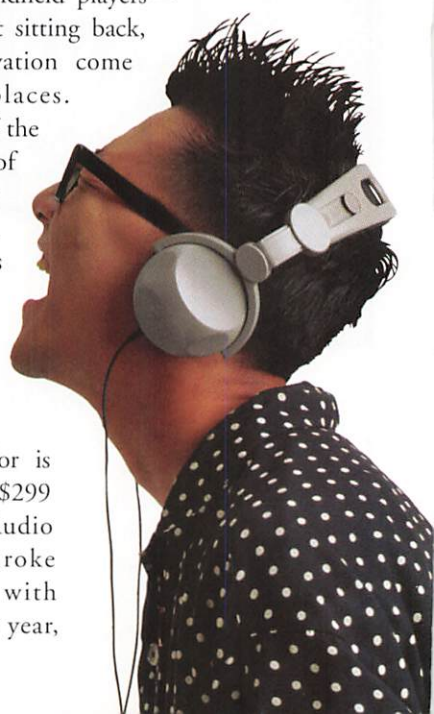
A highly affordable way to get MP3s into your dashboard comes from SSI America, with its Neo 35 player. Like the Rio Car, the Neo 35 uses PC hard drives for storage; however, it takes standard 3.5-inch drives, which are significantly cheaper and available in much larger capacities than low-profile laptop drives. You can buy the player without a hard drive for $379 (www.ssiamerica.com), or in a variety of kits, including the $599 Jukebox Kit, which includes a 30GB hard drive, a wired control panel, and an FM modulator. Connecting this device to your PC for song downloads isn't as simple as with the Rio Car—you have to install the PC Bay adapter in your computer first, which uses an IDE connector and a power connector internally. You should check to make sure that your computer can accommodate the device before you buy. A USB option will be available later this year.

Not to be outdone on their home turf, traditional car stereo manufacturers are getting on the MP3 train as well. At this year's Consumer Electronics Show, Kenwood announced a raft of new in-dash products that include a number of CD receivers that also play CD-R and CD-RW discs (audio, or MP3-encoded).

This company has taken a slightly different approach to mobilizing MP3—instead of relying on internal storage, the Kenwood players accept media that you can burn MP3 onto (hence, CD-R and CD-RW support). Available now is the Kenwood eXcelon Z828 receiver, which costs about $600 at various online outlets, including www.crutchfield.com. As you would expect from a company that specializes in car audio equipment, the capabilities of this system as a stereo exceed those of competitors' products. For example, the Z828 features 4.5v front and rear pre-amp outputs, it's satellite radio ready, and it interfaces with Kenwood's eXcelon C907 CD changer. Kenwood was an early player in this market (debuting last year with it Z919 product), but has now been joined by Aiwa, JVC, Panasonic, Rockford Fosgate, and Sony. Panasonic's new receiver, the CQ-SRX7000U ($1,500, list) adds an interesting feature: in addition to accepting CD or CD-R media, it can play MP3 and AAC files directly from a Secure Digital memory card. So, if you have a portable device (like one from Panasonic's e-wear line), it can easily share tunes with your car's audio system.

CARRY IT

The devices that started the portable MP3 revolution—the personal handheld players—are certainly not sitting back, watching innovation come from other places. Indeed, a few of the manufacturers of these devices are finding new and innovative ways to deliver a more rewarding listening experience.



One such vendor is Intel, with its $299 Pocket Concert Audio Player. Intel broke new ground with this device last year,

because the company equipped it with 128MB of integrated, low-power memory (read: longer battery life) as a standard feature. This means that you can load up to four hours of music onto the device at a time, and you can run it continuously for about 10 hours before the two AAA batteries run out. The Pocket Concert supports MP3 and WMA formats now, but its firmware is reprogrammable, so it can be compatible with more file formats as they're introduced in the future. The device also has a built-in FM radio with 10 presets. Optional accessories include a Stereo Dock and a Car Adapter, so the Pocket Concert can be used in a variety of locations.

Intel Pocket Concert

One of the early pioneers in this market, Creative Labs, has introduced a new line of devices that take portable audio to the next level. The Nomad Jukebox systems are about the size of portable CD players, and have 6GB worth of storage, so they can hold the same number of songs as 150 CDs (at 128kbps MP3 encoding; up to 300 at 64kbps WMA). The new Nomad Jukebox C is priced at just $269; supports MP3, WMA, and WAV formats; and you can record directly to it from external devices via its stereo line-in minijack. The player also supports four-channel sound via two line-out jacks for front and rear speakers; and it has a memory buffer that's large enough to handle up to five minutes of shock protection. The Nomad Jukebox can easily double as a portable player and as your primary music device at home—perfect for small spaces like New York City apartments.

Providing yet another twist on the portable MP3 theme is Samsung, with its YVP-P300, the Photo Yepp II. Due to be released later this year, the Photo Yepp II will have a full-color, 1.8-inch LCD screen, so you can display still images and lyrics to accompany the songs that you're listening to. The device can play MP3 or WMA formats, has 64MB of internal flash memory, and will accept SmartMedia cards as well.

No matter how you choose to get your MP3s—be it in your living room, in your car, in the palm of your hand, or strapped to your arm—your choices have never been more varied or exciting. If you're a music fan (and who isn't?) you owe it to yourself to check out these and other devices, so you too can join the MP3 revolution. ■

CEA
Consumer Electronics Association

The Consumer Electronics Association (CEA) is the trade organization for the companies that create and market the products that enable the information age. Best known as the producer and sponsor of the annual International Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas each winter, CEA reinvests all profits from CES into industry services including technical training and education, product promotion, engineering standards development, market research, and governmental and legal affairs support. CEA provides resources to help you navigate the fast-moving consumer technology industry, where products continue to converge—blurring the lines between information technology and entertainment, between television and computer, between lifestyle and workstyle, and between e-commerce and traditional retail stores. Reach CEA on the Web at www.CE.org.

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CONTENTS

FEATURES

96 **MUSIC ONLINE**
Your guide to the 23 songs left on Napster, including "Three Times a Lady," "Disco Duck," "We Built This City," "California Girls" (David Lee Roth version), and "Who Let the Dogs Out"

102 **THE GREAT WEB WAY**
Will Broadway go gaga over *AskJeeves.com: The Musical*? Featuring Nathan Lane as Jeeves and the showstopping number "Where Can I Buy a Windbreaker in Houston?"

112 **LAST MAN STANDING**
Obiri Gugathongo, a tribal chief in Botswana, remains the last man on earth without Internet access. And he's not budging. Plus: An Inuit gets Intuit

COLUMNS

68 **ROGER E-BORG** ▸ *Critical Eye: Resistance Is Futile*
His reviews are real. But he is not

70 **ANGELA GUNN** ▸ *Net Ethics: The QuickTime and the Dead*
Should online executions be pay-per-view—or subscription-based?

72 **ROBERT SCHEER** ▸ *Privacy Watch: Every Breath We Take*
Our Robot Leaders are watching our every move. And that is a good thing! Let us praise our beneficent Robot Leaders

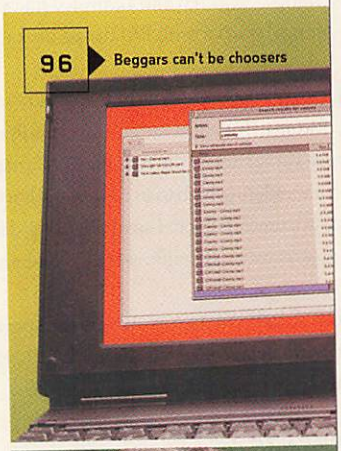
DEPARTMENTS

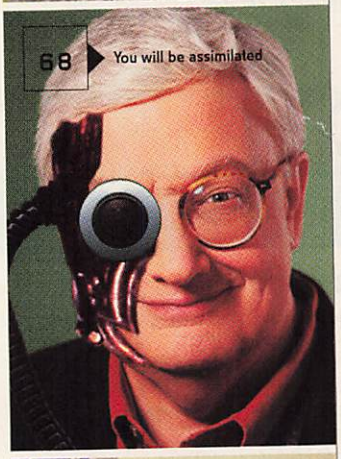
34 **INCREDIBLY USEFUL SITES**
How to vote for Robot Leaders online, enjoy robot pornography, shop for Mother's Day gifts, and survive the coming famine

54 **COOL TOOLS**
Snap on your new Handspring prosthetics. Plus, the new OffspringBurner copies useful files and transfers them right to your child

76 **Y-LIFE INTERVIEW ▸ COUNTING PENNIES WITH JEFF BEZOS**
The e-commerce pioneer promises—promises!—that this is the year Amazon.com turns a profit. Or 2008, at the latest

126 **PRETTY STRANGE**
Did you know Amazon.com is named after the Amazon "rain forest"? A "rain forest" was a tropical woodland with a high annual rainfall, once common in New Robotia (formerly South America)





TRAVELING THROUGH TIME TO ANCIENT ROME

OLD WAY

1 In the mood for a gladiator match, I rode my Ginger (a 2003 model, without the 4-D upgrade) to the nearest time-travel station. Squeezed into a crowded transporter, and stood next to a Mongol warrior with BO dating back to 1217.

2 Got off the transporter at the 159 A.D. station, which was unfortunately located far from ancient Rome. I then embarked on a sea voyage across the Atlantic to Normandy, where I slaughtered a wandering barbarian to steal his horse. Although I got to Rome in a timely fashion, I arrived at the gladiator match in the second quarter owing to traffic in the Colosseum parking stables.

TIME ELAPSED A 15-minute transporter ride, a six-month boat trip (delayed by Viking raids), three weeks over land, minus 1,847 years back in time

COMMENTS Getting back wasn't any easier.

NET WAY

1 Went to Chronopedia.com and uploaded myself to my seat in the Colosseum upper deck in time for the warm-ups.

TIME ELAPSED One and a half minutes

COMMENTS As the result of a software virus, I arrived in Rome with only nine fingers.

WINNER: NET WAY A missing digit is preferable to scurvy on the high seas.

Top of the Net

WEB TOPPERS

The most popular sites among Web surfers...

1 E-KIDNEY.COM
2 CYBORGHOTORNOT.COM
3 JONATHANLIPNICKI.NET/POST-ENLARGEMENTPHOTOS
4 EBAY.COM/KIDNEYS
5 EBAY.COM/BEANIEBABIES

...and the top news/information sites.

1 AOLCONDÉPOST-TIMES-CNNBCBSNAPPLE.COM
2 N/A
3 N/A

CHATS

The best-attended get-togethers at Yahoo! Chat [chat.yahoo.com].

1 SARAH MICHELLE GELLAR-CLINTON
2 JENNA BUSH, Vice President, Anheuser-Busch
3 JANET JACKSON-JACKSON AND HER HUSBAND, MICHAEL
4 CAST FROM *SURVIVOR 9: DOWNTOWN MILWAUKEE*
5 GREEN PARTY LEADER JIM JEFFORDS

GENETIC TRAITS

The most-requested traits for new babies, according to Build-A-Kid Inc. [legofetus.com].

1 TALL
2 ESP
3 GOOD MEMORY (128 MB)
4 FILIPINO
5 BIG FEET ;-)

BOOKS

The top-selling e-books at Amazon.com.

1 BACK WHEN WE WERE CARBON-BASED, Anne Tyler
2 THE REASON WHY THE CAGED BIRD SINGS HAS BEEN ERASED FROM MY CIRCUITS, Maya Angelou
3 UNDAUNTED BRAVERY: HOW WE WON THE WAR AGAINST MARS, Stephen Ambrose
4 I'LL BE BACK...IN 2008, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger
5 THE FINAL DEFEAT: HOW WE LOST THE WAR AGAINST THE ROBOTS, Stephen Ambrose
6 WHO MOVED MY DAIRY-BASED MEMORY-ENHANCER?, Spencer Johnson
7 TO LOVE AGAIN, Hillary Rodham-McCain

MUSIC

The top-selling albums at Amazon.com.

1 LOVE SONGS TO MY LIFE PARTNER, Eminem
2 YOUR ROBOT LEADERS INTERPRET THE SONGS OF LAURA NYRO, Your Robot Leaders
3 TRUE GANGSTA SH-- FOR ALL MY BITCHES, Daniel Patrick Moynihan

SOFTWARE

The top-selling software titles, according to Amazon.com.

1 ADOBE BABYMAKER 2.0
2 MICROSOFT WINDOWS XP
3 MICROSOFT WINDOWS XXXP
4 MICROSOFT WINDOWS X-P-ALI-DOCIOUS
5 THOUGHT NANNY 3.1
6 NORTON ANTI-EBOLA

SPACE SHUTTLES

The top-selling space shuttles at Amazon.com.

1 STS-83
2 STS-87
3 XT-44

By Modern Humorist [modernhumorist.com]

Eight Writers... FROM PAGE 136

Christopher Buckley

called the Drudge Report and found this item about a blue dress. I was the hit of the party.

As for the Otherwise moments: There was the summer when, in our fragile little cabin on the rocky Maine coast I sought to find out the track of the hurricane that was working its furious way up the American littoral to see if I, my wife, and our babies were in its path. I soon found a site that provided not only real-time satellite photos of the storm, but also its probable track and estimated time of landfall. I rubbed my eyes like Cro-Magnon man beholding fire for the first time.

Someone said to me, "Do you know about concordance.com?"

"Tell me about it!" I cried. "I want to know!" I had been transformed from grumpy Luddite to avid Futurist.

Great Books: Tests and Fully Searchable Concordances [concordance.com] is the work of a retired actuary—saintly man, cyberpriest—who has created a site gathering together the concordances of many major authors and works of literature (my own, conspicuously excluded). Want to know how many times Huck Finn used the *n*-word? In which scene in *King Lear* occurs the phrase, "How sharper than a serpent's tooth..."? Where in the Bible it says, deliciously, "comfort me with apples"? Go to Great Books and give grateful thanks, pilgrim.

Someone else said to me, "Do you know about **Trip.com**?" Before he could say another word, I was there, pricing flights and renting cars. What's this little link here? FlightTracker? You're picking up your wife at the airport tonight. She's coming in on Delta Flight 17 from Salt Lake. Type it in. Wait...10 seconds—an eternity in cyberspace! Dammit, can't you go any faster?—there you go, an icon of her plane, superimposed above Indiana. She's running 20 minutes late. Still have time to finish supper before heading off to Dulles. *Wow* gives way to a shrug. No, I lie. I am still Cro-Magnon man. My jaw scrapes the ground.

What is the Dr. Seuss title I read to my babies? *Oh, the Places You'll Go!* People today say, "Don't go there." But I go! I'm there!

How many Republicans does it take to do a Google search?

Three—one to hit Search, two to reminisce about how slow the old modem was. <<

17 People... FROM PAGE 126

NOTE: Credits refer to models used in photo composite, and not to personalities portrayed.

"William Shatner": Tommy Hilfiger sport coat [tommy.com]; Levi's denim shirt and jeans [levi.com].

"Jerry Yang": Marzotto Lab clothing [marzottousa.com]; Dexter footwear [dextershoe.com].

"Stephen King": Ron Chereskin sweatshirt [chereskin.com]; Slates trousers [slates.com]; Dexter footwear [dextershoe.com]; RCA REB1200 eBook [rca.com].

"Steve Case": Calvin Klein suit, Joseph Abboud neckwear [saksfifthavenue.com]; Tommy Hilfiger dress shirt [tommy.com].

"Meg Whitman": clothing from Liz Claiborne Collection [lizclaiborne.com]; Cole Haan footwear [www.colehaan.com].

"Bill Gates": After Six tuxedo [aftersix.com]; Dexter footwear [dextershoe.com].

"Tim Berners-Lee": Marzotto Lab clothing [marzottousa.com]; Cole Haan footwear [www.colehaan.com].

"Al Gore": Tommy Hilfiger suit and dress shirt [tommy.com]; Vestimenta neckwear [vestimenta.com].

"Seth Warshavsky": Samsonite clothing [samsonite.com]; Cole Haan footwear [www.colehaan.com]; Sony DSR-PD150 video camera [sony.com].

"Pamela Anderson": Fernando Sanchez dress; call (212) 989-9166 to order.

"Matt Drudge": Vestimenta clothing [vestimenta.com]; Cole Haan footwear [www.colehaan.com].

"Hilary Rosen": clothing from Liz Claiborne Collection [lizclaiborne.com]; Seiko watch [seikousa.com]; Naturalizer Captiva footwear [www.naturalizeronline.com].

"Shawn Fanning": Calvin Klein T-shirt [macys.com]; Gap cargo pants [gap.com]; Puma sneakers [puma.com].

"Jeff Bezos": Gap clothing [gap.com]; Dexter footwear [dextershoe.com].

"Kevin Mitnick": Marzotto Lab clothing [marzottousa.com]; Vestimenta neckwear [vestimenta.com]; Cole Haan footwear [www.colehaan.com].

"David Bowie": D & G suit and tuxedo shirt [www.dolcegabbana.it]; Vestimenta neckwear [vestimenta.com]; Warren Edwards footwear [warrenedwards.com]; Pioneer CDJ-1000 digital turntable [pioneerprodj.com].

Furniture: Ross Lovegrove for Bernhardt Design café tables and chairs [dwr.com]; Crate & Barrel glasses [crateandbarrel.com]; Piero Lissoni Nest leather bench [cassinausa.com]; M2L Collection Atlas table [m2lcollection.com]; Sam Ash Music microphone [www.samashmusic.com].

E-Mail Fashion FROM PAGE 109

Credit card scene, page 103 Suit, $985, and dress shirt, $125, from BOSS Hugo Boss [hugoboss.com]; Kinetic watch, $400, from Seiko [seikousa.com]; footwear, $178, by Kenneth Cole [kennethcole.com]; Courvoisier VSOP cognac, $46, at Wine.com; Flokati rug, $599, from ABC Carpet & Home [abchome.com].

Window-washing scene, page 104 *Left:* suit, $1,295, and shirt, $175, from Canali [canali.it]; neckwear, $88, from Hickey-Freeman [hickeyfreeman.com]; Bogart oxfords footwear, $155, from Banana Republic [bananarepublic.com]. *Right:* bib overalls, $38 each, from Carhartt [carhartt.com]; T-shirts, $19 (set of three), from Joe Boxer [joeboxer.com]; boots, $145 per pair, from Timberland [timberland.com]; hats, $20 each, from Triple 5 Soul [triple5soul.com]. *Foreground:* slim attaché, $1,295, from Hartmann [hartmann.com]; Sony VAIO R505 SuperSlim Pro laptop, starts at $1,800, from Sony [sonystyle.com/vaio]; Berlina lamp, $424, from Modernica [www.modernica.net].

Minister scene, page 105 *On him:* suit, $595, by DKNY [dkny.com]; mock turtleneck, $65, from Nordstrom [nordstrom.com]; City slip-on footwear, $165, from Cole Haan [www.colehaan.com]. *On her:* stretch poplin blouse, $78, from Guess? Collection [guess.com]; skirt, $98, from Banana Republic [bananarepublic.com]; Lafayette watch, $495, from Coach [coach.com]; footwear, $415, by Dolce & Gabbana [www.dolcegabbana.it].

Diploma scene, page 106 Button-down shirt, $50, from J.Crew [jcrew.com]; trousers, $78, from Eddie Bauer [eddiebauer.com]; sport coat, $995, and neckwear, $95, from Canali [canali.it]; eyewear, $163, from Gucci [safilo.com]; belt, $38, by Kenneth Cole [kennethcole.com]; Classic Torneau watch, $1,095, from Oris [www.oris-watch.com].

Bedroom scene, page 107 *On him:* robe, $54, by Tommy Hilfiger [tommy.com]; boxer briefs, $78, by Emporio Armani [giorgioarmani.com]. *On her:* nightgown, $24, from GapBody [gap.com]. Lana bed, $3,200; duvet, $250; sheets, $130 per sheet; pillowcases (set of two), $105; Cube side table with door, $900, and open side table, $750, Note lamps, $350 each; all from Dialogica [dialogicadesign.com].

Millionaire scene, pages 108–109 *Left:* bodysuit, $360, and leather leopard footwear, $415, by Dolce & Gabbana [www.dolcegabbana.it]; leather miniskirt, $158, by Kenneth Cole [kennethcole.com]. *Center:* tuxedo, $998, and tuxedo shirt, $248, by Emporio Armani [giorgioarmani.com]; neckwear, $65, by Giorgio Armani [giorgioarmani.com]; vest, $335, from Robert Talbott [www.roberttalbott.com]; stud set, $1,750, from Alfred Dunhill [www.dunhill.com]; Lexington watch, $695, from Coach [coach.com]; Paxil footwear, $175, from Johnston & Murphy [johnstonandmurphy.com]. *Right:* bodysuit, $320, by Dolce & Gabbana [www.dolcegabbana.it]; leather skirt, $158, by Kenneth Cole [kennethcole.com]; leopard rug, $800, from ABC Carpet & Home [abchome.com].

Mail-order woman scene, page 109 *Right:* turtleneck, $98, from Nautica [nautica.com]; leather trousers, $495, by DKNY [dkny.com]; suede jacket, $295, from Claiborne Menswear [lizclaiborne.com]; Hunter Mach 3 watch, $995, from Swiss Army [swissarmy.com]; Country footwear, $175, from Cole Haan [www.colehaan.com]; eyewear, $180, from Gucci [safilo.com]. *Left:* Accomplish footwear, $90, from Rockport [rockport.com]. Dropp sofa, $2,175, from Skandiform; She sofa table, $575, by David Design; and Forflund rug, $1,675; all at Totem Design [totemdesign.com].

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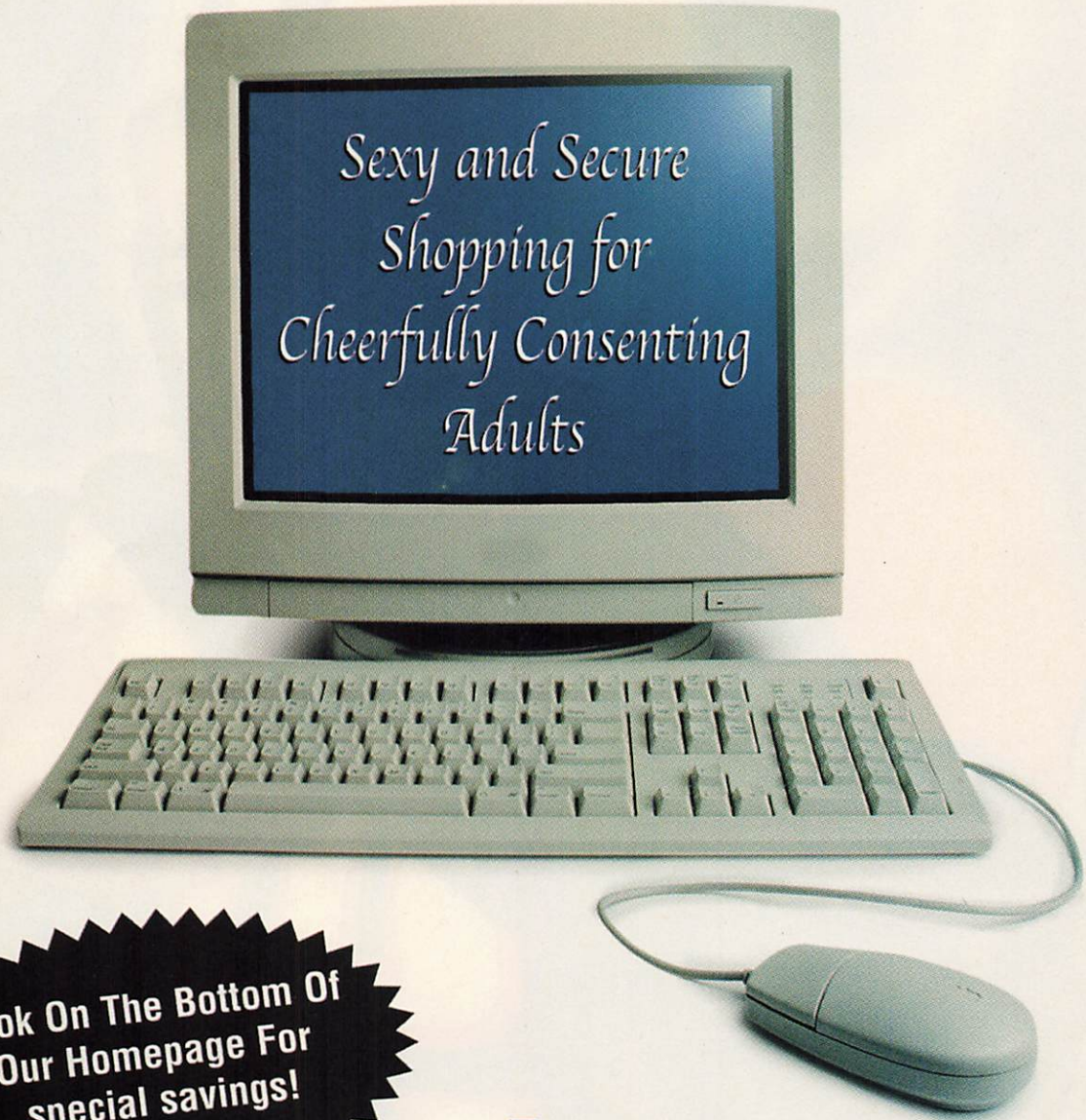

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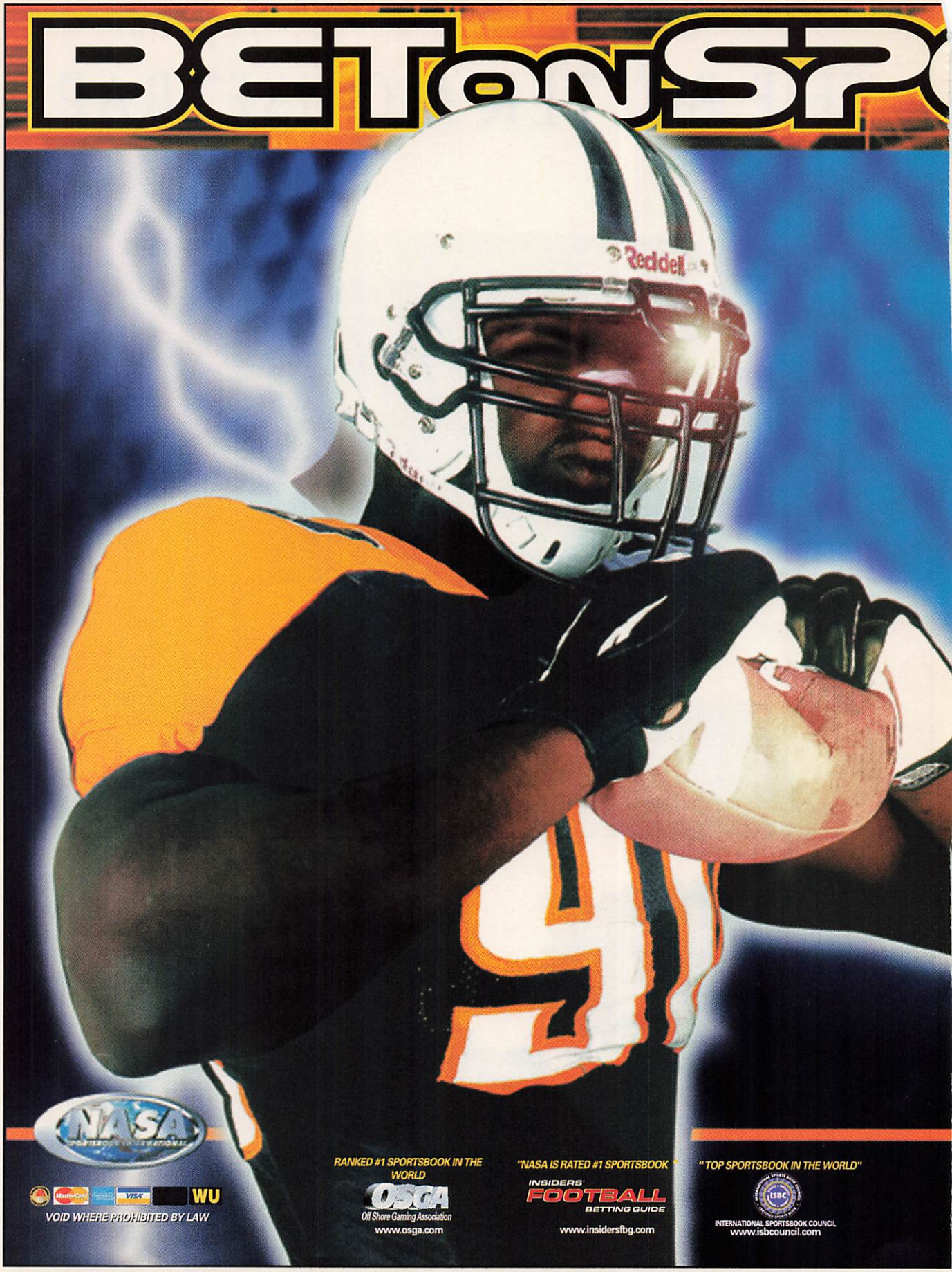

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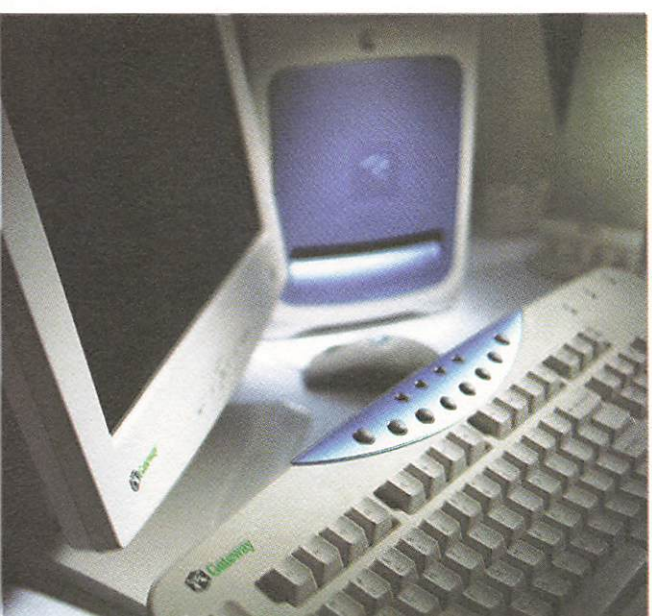

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YOU'RE SITTING THERE AT 20,000 FEET, LOOKing for a little light reading, when you come across what appears to be a laminated comic-book page tucked in the seat pocket in front of you. The plot seems to involve some kind of party with slides and whistles and everyone playing in the ocean. It's hard to know for sure, though, because somehow the captions for each image have been left off. Luckily, Airtoons has unearthed the unabridged version, letting us all know, finally, what's going on. Adults only. [airtoons.com]

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WEB CAMS ARE SUPPOSED TO ENLIVEN your crushingly dull existence by letting you glimpse the lives of those more fabulous than you. Unfortunately, it turns out that other people are even *more* boring. But the Centre for the Easily Amused has rounded up six cams that live up to their promise. Thrill to the sweeping majesty of the Continental Drift Cam! See grass actually growing! Will that paint peel? Will it? [amused.com/amusements/web_cam_cinema]

FREAK WATCHER'S TEXTBOOK

CONTEMPLATING AN EXPEDITION TO THE WILDS OF ROYAL OAK, MICHIGAN? ARM YOURSELF with a little knowledge first to avoid mistaking a Lesser BillyBob (*Homo derelictus*) for a Mulletboy (*Mulletus welfaritum*). The distinction is subtle yet important—the former "marks territory" with "inexpensive alcohol," while the latter does it by "urinating in public." Many of the region's denizens are friendly and/or harmless (the BarCode Comb-Over, the Fat Larry, and the White Rasta, to name a few), yet caution should be exercised when approaching ornerier types such as the Eight-Pump Mocha Yeti, a fearsome beast whose gender has yet to be determined. [homepage.mac.com/davezilla]

THE VISIBLE BARBIE PROJECT

CONTINUING THE NET'S LONG TRADITION OF ACADEMIC DISCOURSE, SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY, AND utterly frivolous research, the Visible Barbie Project provides the world with its first complete model of the internal structure of America's patron saint of female body image. The project brings much-needed closure to several areas of Doll Biology—most significantly, that other than some ingrown hair follicles, Barbie's head is entirely empty (which might explain why she's always dated an anatomically incorrect man). [trygve.com/visible_barbie.html]

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